



	<b>REPORT No.: 2021-65</b>
<b>MEETING DATE: DECEMBER 16, 2021</b>	<b>DATE PREPARED: DECEMBER 2, 2021</b>
<b>SUBJECT: 2022 RURAL ONTARIO MUNICIPAL ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE BRIEFINGS PACKAGE</b>	

### **RECOMMENDATION**

THAT with respect to Report No. 2021-65 (CAO Division), we, The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board (the Board), approve the delegation briefings package for the Rural Ontario Municipalities Association (ROMA) 2022 conference as presented;

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

AND THAT the Briefings Package be circulated to all member municipalities, the Northern Ontario Service Deliverers' Association, the Ontario Municipal Social Services Association, the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association, the Rural Ontario Municipal Association and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario.

AND THAT the CAO attend the virtual 2022 ROMA 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 District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board (TBDSSAB or the Board) with the briefings package for the 2022 ROMA conference for review and approval.

### **BACKGROUND**

ROMA will be holding its 2022 Annual Conference virtually, January 24–26, 2022. As part of the programming for the Annual Conference, organizations may submit requests to meet with a Minister or Parliamentary Assistant.

### **COMMENTS**

Briefings have been developed by the Integrated Social Services Division team in consultation with the Office of the Chief Administrative Officer on eight issues that are

recommended to the Board for advocacy with provincial Ministers. The ROMA conference is one opportunity for the Board Chair, supported by other Board members and Administration, to present these issues to Ministers.

The Briefings Package contains a total of eight key recommendations to four Ministries.

#### Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS)

- 1) **Social Assistance Rates:** TBDSSAB urges the MCCSS to address the adequacy of current social assistance rates for recipients of Ontario Works.
- 2) **Indigenous Board Representation:** TBDSSAB requests that MCCSS considers changes to the DSSAB Act to allow for additional appointments by the Boards to include Indigenous representation.
- 3) **DSSAB Legislation and Governance:** TBDSSAB requests that MCCSS finalize the changes to the DSSAB Act, Regulations and Governance and Accountability Guidelines.

#### Ministry of Education

- 4) **Child Care Workforce Development:** TBDSSAB requests that the Ministry of Education provide Service Managers with ongoing funding for the recruitment, retention and workforce development of child care staff, and establish a provincial panel to strategize on the long-term future of child care.
- 5) **Before & After School Program Delivery:** TBDSSAB requests that the Ministry of Education provide firm direction to School Boards regarding their responsibility for Before and After School program Delivery.

#### Ministry of Health (MOH)

- 6) **Transitional & Supportive Housing:** TBDSSAB requests that the MOH partner with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) to provide designated funding in the District of Thunder Bay for a new purpose-built transitional housing project(s) consisting of a minimum of 50 units with Rent Supplements and mental health and addictions agencies to be provided a long term commitment for support funding to ensure that supports can be provided to individuals accessing these units.
- 7) **Mental Health & Addictions Supports for In Situ Tenants:** TBDSSAB requests that the MOH partner with MMAH to provide designated funding in the District of Thunder Bay for mental health and addictions supports for in situ tenants of community housing.

Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing

- 8) **Homelessness Prevention Funding:** TBDSSAB requests that the MMAH combine the Home for Good and Community Homelessness and Prevention Initiative (CHPI) allocations and increase the combined amount to \$5,440,093 and allow for capital projects to be funded through CHPI.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**



There are no immediate financial implications related to this report.

**CONCLUSION**

It is concluded that the briefings package is recommended for approval.

**REFERENCE MATERIALS ATTACHED**

Attachment #1 [Briefings Package for the 2022 ROMA Conference](#)

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<b>APPROVED / SIGNATURE:</b>	
	William (Bill) Bradica, Chief Administrative Officer The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board
<b>SUBMITTED / SIGNATURE:</b>	
	William (Bill) Bradica, Chief Administrative Officer The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board



THE DISTRICT OF THUNDER BAY  
SOCIAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION BOARD

# Social Assistance Rates

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## POSITION PAPER

**January 2022**

**Rural Ontario Municipalities Association (ROMA) Conference**

Prepared by:

The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board

Prepared for:

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton, Minister of Children, Community and Social Services

## Brief

The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board (TBDSSAB) urges the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) to address the adequacy of current social assistance rates, in particular the need to improve the maximum shelter allowances for recipients of Ontario Works.

## Summary

The TBDSSAB urges MCCSS to adjust Ontario Works rates to match local average market rents and to set basic needs and shelter rates for Ontario Works according to locally defined market baskets of essential goods, including transportation, telephone, average market rents and a nutritious food basket, that are adjusted annually according to the Consumer Price Index.

## Background

Rents in Thunder Bay increased 3.5% between 2018 and 2019 and by approximately another 2.3% from 2019 and 2020<sup>1</sup>. As illustrated in Figure A, Ontario Works shelter allowances are insufficient to cover housing expenses for a benefit unit of their size. Households are then placed in the position to draw on their Basic Needs Allowances meant for food and clothing to pay for shelter costs.

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<sup>1</sup> Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. Housing Market Information Portal. 2021. <https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/hmiportal>

**Figure A: Shelter Allowances Compared to Average Rent in Thunder Bay**

<b>Benefit Unit Size</b>	<b>Apartment Size</b>	<b>Average Rent (Thunder Bay)</b>	<b>OW Shelter Rate</b>	<b>Average Shelter Allowance Shortfall</b>
<b>1</b>	Bachelor	\$732	\$390	-\$342
<b>2</b>	1 Bedroom	\$880	\$642	-\$238
<b>3</b>	2 Bedroom	\$1,092	\$697	-\$395
<b>4</b>	3+ Bedroom	\$1,298	\$756	-\$542
<b>5</b>	3+ Bedroom	\$1,324	\$815	-\$509
<b>6+</b>	3+ Bedroom	\$1,324	\$844	-\$480

For example, a single, 40-year-old Ontario Works recipient will experience a shortfall of approximately \$229 after paying the average rent on a bachelor apartment and the cost of a nutritious food basket (\$249.96) in Thunder Bay<sup>2</sup>.

Households in such circumstances ultimately turn to food banks to account for some of this shortfall. In the District of Thunder Bay, over 26,000 meals are provided each month<sup>3</sup>. Across Ontario, the number of people accessing food banks has increased

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<sup>2</sup> Thunder Bay District Health Unit. "The Cost of Eating Well in the District of Thunder Bay 2020." <https://www.tbdhu.com/sites/default/files/files/resource/2019-10/The%20Cost%20of%20Eating%20Well%202019.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Regional Food Distribution Association. FAQs. <http://www.foodbanksnorthwest.ca/about-us/faqs/> Accessed February 19, 2020.

1.8% since 2018 and 72% of households accessing food banks in 2019 lived in market rental accommodations. Only 0.7% of food bank users identify as homeless<sup>4</sup>.

When households on Ontario Works cannot afford market rental units the only option is to couch surf or to access emergency shelters. The number of emergency shelter beds used annually in Thunder Bay has increased an average of 2% year over year since 2015. The cost contributed by TBDSSAB for an individual to stay in an emergency shelter in Thunder Bay for one month is \$1,089. Including other funding sources, the true cost paid by shelters averages more than \$2,200 a month per individual<sup>5</sup>.

By bringing shelter rates up to the average market rent of a bachelor apartment in the District of Thunder Bay for individuals in receipt of social assistance, the province would reduce homelessness and potential monthly cost savings of \$1,468 per recipient<sup>6</sup> could be realized. This savings is calculated by assuming that a single person on OW is homeless because they can't afford rent and that they are therefore at an emergency shelter for one month at a cost of \$2,200. For the District of Thunder Bay, if OW shelter rates were to match the average rent for a single person the shelter allowance would need to be increased by \$342 (bachelor apartment = \$732 rent). Therefore, by increasing the shelter rate by \$342, the month-long shelter stay is eliminated and an estimated savings of \$1,468 is realized on the system (Shelter Stay \$2,200 - \$342 OW shelter rate increase = \$1,468).

Further, the Basic Needs allowance has not increased since 2018. According to the Bank of Canada, the cost of a fixed basket of consumer products has risen by 6.88% between 2018 and 2021<sup>7</sup>. This results in significantly less buying power today for recipients of Social Assistance. This also leaves OW recipients unable to afford services such as phone and internet, which have become essential needs. Therefore,

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<sup>4</sup> Feed Ontario. Hunger Report 2019. <https://feedontario.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Hunger-Report-2019-Feed-Ontario-Digital.pdf> Accessed February 19, 2020.

<sup>5</sup> TBDSSAB Shelter Data and CHPI shelter allocations + Emergency Shelters operating costs not covered by TBDSSAB as calculated during Operational Review

<sup>6</sup> Based on TBDSSAB calculations of CHPI shelter allocations and OW rates

<sup>7</sup> Bank of Canada Inflation Calculator. <https://www.bankofcanada.ca/rates/related/inflation-calculator/>

the Basic Needs allowance should be increased to reflect the local market basket measure and set to rise each year with the increased cost of living to ensure individuals and families maintain the same buying power year over year.

Therefore, TBDSSAB urges MCCSS to adjust Ontario Works shelter rates to match local average market rents. As well, TBDSSAB calls on MCCSS to set basic needs and shelter rates for Ontario Works according to locally defined market baskets of essential goods, including transportation, telephone, average market rents and a nutritious food basket, that are adjusted annually according to the Consumer Price Index.





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

# Indigenous Board Representation

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## **POSITION PAPER**

**January 2022**

**Rural Ontario Municipalities Association (ROMA) Conference**

Prepared by:

The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board

Prepared for:

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton, Minister of Children, Community and Social Services

## Brief

The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board (TBDSSAB) requests that the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) considers changes to Schedule 6 of O. Reg. 278/98 to the DSSAB Act to allow for Indigenous representation on the TBDSSAB Board.

## Summary

A disproportionate number of the individuals and families that the TBDSSAB serve self-identify as Indigenous and living off-reserve. The TBDSSAB has worked with Indigenous partners in order to develop programs and services in a culturally appropriate manner. To further our work towards reconciliation, the TBDSSAB requests the ability to include Indigenous representation on our Board.

## Background

The District of Thunder Bay has a higher Indigenous population per capita compared to the rest of Ontario, and a disproportionate number of the individuals and families that TBDSSAB serve self-identify as Indigenous and living off-reserve. A recent study from Our Health Counts estimates that the number of Indigenous adults in the city of Thunder Bay is 2-4 times higher than the census data for 2016<sup>1</sup>, representing 40% of

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<sup>1</sup> Our Health Counts Thunder Bay, Adult Demographics

the total population of the city<sup>2</sup>. To better meet the local needs of our service area, the TBDSSAB has worked with Indigenous partners and organizations in order to develop programs and services in a culturally appropriate manner.

Under the District Social Services Administration Boards Act, R.S.O. 1990, the composition of each board and the qualifications and term of office of the members thereof are prescribed by the regulations. The number of members of each of the boards, the areas that those members represent, and the manner of their appointment are set out in Schedules to the O. Reg. 278/98. Under Schedule 6, the TBDSSAB is required to have 14 members with the areas they represent and the manner of their appointment mandated under that Schedule.

The TBDSSAB Board has included an objective in its 2020-2023 Strategic Plan to have Indigenous representation on the Board.

The TBDSSAB supports the goal of reconciliation with the Indigenous population. A significant step was taken in 2019, when the TBDSSAB signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Nishnawbe Aski Nation. This MOU sets the groundwork for increased collaboration on intersecting issues between the two organizations. Further, the TBDSSAB has begun a process to engage with Indigenous partner organizations to gather input and support for the Board's objective to have Indigenous representation. The information gathered will inform how Indigenous people should be represented on the TBDSSAB Board. The results of this engagement process and the subsequent recommendations will be shared with MCCSS.

The TBDSSAB requests the ability to achieve our strategic goal for inclusion and to continue on our path towards reconciliation by allowing for additional appointments to the Board that would be occupied by Indigenous representatives. Through this, the TBDSSAB expects to strengthen our understanding of Indigenous culture and increase our ability to develop culturally appropriate programs and services to meet the needs of our Indigenous clients and tenants.

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<sup>2</sup> Statistics Canada. 2017. *Thunder Bay, [Census subdivision], Ontario and Thunder Bay District [Census division], Ontario (table). Census Profile. 2016 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2016001.*

Therefore, TBDSSAB requests that MCCSS considers changes to Schedule 6 to O. Reg. 278/98 the DSSAB Act to allow for Indigenous representation on the TBDSSAB Board.



THE DISTRICT OF THUNDER BAY  
SOCIAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION BOARD

# DSSAB Legislation and Governance

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## POSITION PAPER

**January 2022**

**Rural Ontario Municipalities Association (ROMA) Conference**

Prepared by:

The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board

Prepared for:

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton, Minister of Children, Community and Social Services

## Brief

The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board (TBDSSAB) calls on the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) to proceed with changes to the DSSAB Act and Regulations and finalize the DSSAB Governance and Accountability Guidelines further to the June 2019 Report of the Expert Advisor.

## Summary

The TBDSSAB appreciates the Ministry's history of consulting with DSSABs about possible amendments to the Act and the Interim Governance and Accountability Guidelines. However, final changes have yet to be made based on feedback received from service managers between 2017-2019.

Therefore, TBDSSAB calls on the Minister to consider the Board's recommendations and finalize changes to the DSSAB Act legislation and governance requirements further to the June 2019 report.

## Background

In 2017, the Ministry announced that a review of the DSSAB Act, (1999) would be undertaken. The review was conducted, with the resulting report from the consultant set aside.

In response to a request for input from the province in 2017, TBDSSAB passed a resolution that include a number of suggested changes (Resolution 17-82 and resulted Board Report attached). The recommendations to the Minister contained in

the resolution included the need to update the legislation and DSSAB Governance and Accountability Guidelines, provide greater clarity on the services that DSSABs can deliver and to define whether DSSABs have the ability to exceed legislated or regulated cost sharing formulae.

A further review process was completed by the Ministry in 2019 with a Report of the Expert Advisor to MCCSS completed in June 2019. DSSABs were advised by MCCSS in December 2019 that work would be done in 2020 to “finalize the DSSAB Accountability and Governance guidelines and explore other opportunities to support transparency and accountability of the Boards and ensure they are supported and functioning well.”

Therefore, TBDSSAB calls on the MCCSS to proceed with changes to the DSSAB Act and Regulations and finalize the DSSAB Governance and Accountability Guidelines further to the June 2019 Report of the Expert Advisor.



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

# Child Care Workforce Development

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## **POSITION PAPER**

**January 2022**

**Rural Ontario Municipalities Association (ROMA) Conference**

Prepared by:

The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board

Prepared for:

Hon. Stephen Lecce, Minister of Education



## Brief

The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board (TBDSSAB) requests that the Ministry of Education provide Service Managers with ongoing funding for the recruitment, retention and workforce development of child care staff, and establish a provincial panel to strategize on the long-term future of child care.

## Summary

The TBDSSAB applauds the Ontario government for working toward a child care funding agreement with the federal government. Once that agreement is in place it is expected that with a reduction in fees that there will be increased demand for licensed child care. Given that there is already a waitlist in our service area that cannot be satisfied due in part to the need for more qualified child care staff, there will be a need for ongoing funding for recruitment, retention and workforce development.

## Background

Currently the TBDSSAB has a total child care wait list of 2,490. Of this total, 1,640 (66%) are currently seeking care meaning that their need for child care is immediate.

This wait list is due, in part, to the inability to expand the system as there is lack of qualified child care workers available.

The TBDSSAB has established an interim strategy to address this situation (Appendix #1 - Child Care and Early Years Workforce Strategy Plan, The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board, November 2021), based on the

short-term funding provided through the one-time federal investment in the Child Care and Early Years Workforce Funding.

Additionally, the TBDSSAB suggests that the Ministry of Education explore how School Boards are currently utilizing Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECE). Through the use of a school board's internal complement of RECE for the provision of before and after school programs, some of the workforce shortages within the child care sector could be addressed and more programs for the Birth to 4 years of age developed.

It is only through the successful implementation of the Workforce Strategy that the TBDSSAB will start to be able to meet the growing demand for child care services in the District of Thunder Bay. However, long-term investment and a provincial strategy are required to make meaningful impacts in the child care sector.

Therefore, TBDSSAB requests that the Ministry of Education provide Service Managers with ongoing funding for the recruitment, retention and workforce development of child care staff and establish a provincial plan to strategize on the long-term future of child care.

## Appendix #1

### Child Care and Early Years Workforce Strategy Plan

It is recognized that “a professional, skilled and engaged early childhood workforce is critical to economic and social productivity and positive life trajectories for children” (McDonald et al., 2018, p. 647).

The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board (TBDSSAB) believes that supporting both the leadership team and the program staff in the District of Thunder Bay is essential to developing positive working conditions and overall satisfaction within the field. Through the development and implementation of the strategies below, TBDSSAB aims to build and enhance capacity within the overall Child Care and Early Years system.

#### Child Care Programs

As of September 2021, the District of Thunder Bay has the following number of program staff in Child Care programs:

Program	Number of RECE (FTE)	Number of Director Approved (FTE) (non-RECE staff)	Number of Other Program Staff (FTE)	Overall Total Number of Program Staff
Child Care	186.51	33.21	47.37	267.09

\*FTE (Full Time Equivalent)

Administration has determined that the child care system would require an additional 110 RECE to be fully operational based on the current licensed spaces in the service system.

#### EarlyON Programs

As of September 2021, the District of Thunder Bay has the following number of program staff in EarlyON Programs:

Program	Number of Current Program Staff	Number of RECE
EarlyON Child & Family Centre	43	20

EarlyON Child and Family Centres require only one RECE in a given program, these are not licensed under the Child Care Early Years Act. Within the current EarlyON programs of the 43 Programs Staff there are 20 RECE.

## **Child Care and Early Years Workforce Funding**

With the Ministry of Education's announcement of a one-time federal investment in Child Care and Early Years Workforce Funding, two key strategies have been identified:

1. Professional Learning Strategy for 2022
2. Recruitment and Retention Strategy

## **Professional Learning Strategy for 2022**

The first component of this strategy will focus on sustaining and engaging the field through ongoing support and development. With a focus on mental health and inclusion, TBDSSAB will organize two professional learning days and grow a network of pedagogical leads.

## **Surveying the Early Years Sector in January 2022**

TBDSSAB needs to look at where the early years workforce is in their journey and how they may be best supported. Through engaging with early years programs, TBDSSAB will gauge current capacity for staffing, determine costs, identify professional learning needs, and determine scheduling that best suits the needs of both the operators and the families. A wholesome understanding of the educator experience and a commitment to supporting the leadership teams will encourage transparent plans going forward.

## **Offer a two-day professional learning opportunity by the end of 2022**

In 2021, TBDSSAB partnered with Rainy River District Social Services Administration Board and Kenora District Services Board to offer a Speaker Series to the early years' communities. This series emphasized education about anti-racism, environmental sustainability, gender inclusion, and mental health. By building on this partnership and the 2021 series, TBDSSAB can capitalize on workforce funding to maximize opportunities for programs in Northwestern Ontario and support continuous professional learning. Feedback from this series will be used to influence ongoing professional learning opportunities that support the four identified key objectives (sustain, enhance, grow, attract) as well as encompass principles from Ontario's Pedagogy, "*How Does Learning Happen?*"

## **Recruitment and Retention Strategy**

A key component of the TBDSSAB Workforce Strategy Plan will be focusing on workforce capacity and innovation to support innovative recruitment and retention strategies. This strategy will focus on mentorship, leadership, and partnerships.

## **Support mentorship opportunities**

TBDSSAB recognizes the value each program offers within our community and are interested in empowering their voices through *mentorship* opportunities. This would include the continued development of a Pedagogical Network where programs may participate and contribute to the building of a collaborative system. Pedagogical Leads within a centre will come together, with TBDSSAB's support, to consider pedagogical concepts and build capacity within their centres.

## **Fostering healthy organizational culture**

As TBDSAAB supports educators within this network, TBDSSAB will weave in concepts of *leadership* and the importance of instilling a healthy *organizational culture*. Through this initiative, TBDSSAB will be supporting administrative staff with opportunities to sustain, enhance and grow through the eyes of the educator.

## **Partnering with Community**

Our beliefs surrounding recruitment strategies require strong *partnerships* within the community. TBDSSAB will continue to work with post-secondary education opportunities may be considered in other capacities when partnering with adult education centers, distance learning programs and recruitment opportunities. Working with school boards to raise awareness around the field of Early Childhood Education will promote the growth of intentional entry into post-secondary programming. These efforts will be supported by intentional promotional campaigns which will highlight the work of Early Childhood Educators and raise awareness around the critical impact the early years has on learning and growth.

Through this workforce strategy, TBDSSAB will develop a more fulsome plan that outlines our priorities for the year and our next steps (i.e., a logic model). These strategies align with the four provincial objectives and support alignment with HDLH by nurturing a sense of community among the early years system and cultivating a sense of appreciation, well-being, and collaboration.

## References

- McDonald, S., Thorpe, K., & Irvine, S. (2018). Low pay but still we stay: Retention in early childhood education and care. *Journal of Industrial Relations*, 60(5), 647-668.  
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- Ontario Ministry of Education. (2014). *How does learning happen? Ontario's pedagogy for the early years*. Queen's Printer for Ontario. <https://files.ontario.ca/edu-how-does-learning-happen-en-2021-03-23.pdf>
- Ontario Ministry of Education. (2021). *Child Care and Early Years Workforce Funding: Ministry of Education*.



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

# Before & After School Program Delivery

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## **POSITION PAPER**

**January 2022**

**Rural Ontario Municipalities Association (ROMA) Conference**

Prepared by:

The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board

Prepared for:

Hon. Stephen Lecce, Minister of Education

## Brief

The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board (TBDSSAB) requests that the Ministry of Education provide firm direction to School Boards to maximize their responsibility for Before and After School program delivery in order to meet the current demand for Before and After School child care.

## Summary

The District of Thunder Bay currently has a Before and After School care waitlist of 911 (JK/SK and School Aged). The School Boards within the District of Thunder Bay are not fulfilling their role in establishing new spaces and the provision of care resulting in hardships for families requiring this service.

## Background

School Boards are required to ensure the provision of Before and After School programs (school board operated or third-party programs) in each elementary school in Ontario for students in Kindergarten to Grade 6 where there is sufficient demand.

School Boards are required to comply with the provisions for Before and After School programs set out under Part IX.1 of the *Education Act, Regulation 221/11* entitled “Extended Day and Third-Party Programs,” and policies set out in the Before and After School Programs Kindergarten to Grade 6 – Policies and Guidelines for School Boards.



Currently, the District of Thunder Bay has a Before and After School care waitlist of 899 children. The District of Thunder Bay has 59 elementary schools, and 59.3% of those schools have child care programs operated through contracts with third party operators. These centres offer a total of 1405 licensed child care spaces for school aged children, and have been unable to operate at full capacity due to staff shortages. There is more demand for child care than the system can accommodate, and not enough qualified staff to support the spaces that are available.

Unfortunately, the child care programs have struggled to retain and recruit staff due to a shortage of qualified child care workers. These programs have had to operate at a reduced capacity or suspend the school-aged program entirely. Currently, there are four Before and After School programs that are unable to operate due to staffing shortages in the District of Thunder Bay.

Despite School Boards having qualified educators on staff, these educators are not made available to fill shortages in the Before and After School programs. The School Boards do not prioritize the before and after school operations, and have not worked with the third party operators to ensure adequate staffing levels by utilizing their own qualified child care workers. School Boards remain at arm's length from Before and After school programs run by third parties in their schools and as a result they often do not consider the before and after school programs in their decision making. As such, the School Boards within the District of Thunder Bay are not appropriately fulfilling their role in establishing new spaces and the provision of care, resulting in hardships for families requiring this service.

Though TBDSSAB continues to engage the local School Boards in discussions around the stability of the child care sector, there has been little progress towards establishing new Before and After School programs. A reimagining of the system where the School Boards work closely in partnership with the third party providers to ensure adequate staffing levels and operating spaces would better serve the families in the District of Thunder Bay. With School Boards taking more responsibility for meeting demand for child care spaces, there may also be opportunities to open centres in schools that do not currently offer Before and After school care, or expand existing programs to meet the demand.

Therefore, TBDSSAB requests that the Ministry of Education provide firm direction to School Boards to maximize their responsibility for Before and After School program delivery in order to meet the current demand for Before & After School child care.

Position Paper: Supportive & Transitional Housing



THE DISTRICT OF THUNDER BAY  
SOCIAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION BOARD

# Mental Health & Addictions Support for Tenants

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## POSITION PAPERS

- 1: Supportive & Transitional Housing
- 2: Mental Health & Addictions Supports for In Situ Tenants

**January 2022**

**Rural Ontario Municipalities Association (ROMA) Conference**

Prepared by:

The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board

Prepared for:

Hon. Christine Elliot, Minister of Health

Hon. Michael Tibollo, Associate Minister Mental Health and Addictions

Hon. Steve Clark, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing

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# Supportive & Transitional Housing

## Brief

The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board (TBDSSAB) requests that the Ministry of Health partner with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) to provide designated funding in the District of Thunder Bay for a new purpose-built transitional housing project(s) consisting of a minimum of 50 units with Rent Supplements and mental health and addictions agencies to be provided a long term commitment for support funding to ensure that supports can be provided to individuals accessing these units.

## Summary

The TBDSSAB recognizes and applauds the government of Ontario's commitment to a multi-ministry approach to addressing homelessness to create permanent and independent housing solutions. However, additional resources are required to provide mental health and addictions supports for the number of individuals who are unable to live independently.

Therefore, TBDSSAB requests that the Ministry of Health partner with the MMAH to provide funding for a new purpose-built dedicated supportive housing project(s) consisting of a minimum of 50 units with rent supplements and mental health and addictions agencies to be provided a long term commitment for funding to ensure that supports can be provided to individuals accessing these units.

## Background

It is evident that various supports are required to ensure successful tenancies, prevent evictions, and to end the cycle of homelessness. For example, the Housing First approach to ending homelessness is well-known for its individualized and client-driven supports as a core principle in sustaining permanent housing. Similarly, the Home for Good initiative launched by the Province has committed funding to help Service Managers house homeless individuals and connect them to appropriate supports to support successful transitions into stable housing.

The TBDSSAB surveyed service providers in the District of Thunder Bay to gauge the number of transitional housing units, rent supplements and other supports that are available for individuals with mental health or addictions.

Based upon this survey, there are 312 transitional units or rent supplements specific for individuals with mental health and addictions. In addition to this, there are 294 individuals that are supported to live independently in the community (Housing First Programs, Social Navigation Programs, etc.) It is presumed that without this support the individual would not succeed in their tenancy.

At this time, there are a total of 198 people on a wait list for a transitional space or rent supplement and 146 individuals on a waitlist to receive support for mental health and addictions.

As a result of these findings, TBDSSAB requests that Ministry of Health partner with the MMAH to provide funding for a new purpose-built 50-unit supportive housing project with dedicated supports. The actual number of beds required in the District of Thunder Bay far exceeds the 50 units requested, given the current waitlist and the fact that the incidence of mental health and addictions is much higher in the District of Thunder Bay than the provincial average as demonstrated through the information in Appendix #1. However, the addition of a minimum of 50 dedicated Mental Health and Addictions units would demonstrate an important step toward meeting the needs in the District of Thunder Bay.

Through the creation of new transitional housing, individuals in need would receive the care they require, and the burden of addictions would be reduced. This would also open space for those waiting to access community housing, reducing the homeless population and those struggling to pay rent in the private sector.

As the evidence demonstrates the District of Thunder Bay has a much higher incidence of mental health and addictions when compared to the Ontario average. This creates more demand for services and supports that can be provided through dedicated supportive housing.

Therefore, TBDSSAB requests that the Ministry of Health partner with the MMAH to provide designated funding in the District of Thunder Bay for a new purpose-built dedicated supportive housing project(s) consisting of a minimum of 50 units with a long term commitment for support funding to ensure these units have the attached supports required.

# Mental Health & Addictions Supports for In Situ Tenants

## Brief

The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board requests that the Ministry of Health partner with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing to provide designated funding in the District of Thunder Bay for mental health and addictions supports for in situ tenants of Community Housing.

## Summary

The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board (TBDSSAB) recognizes and applauds the government of Ontario's supportive approach to addressing homelessness to create permanent and independent housing solutions. However, additional resources are required to provide mental health and addictions supports for in situ tenants of Community Housing and for the non-homeless requiring supports.

Therefore, TBDSSAB requests that the Ministry of Health partner with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing to provide funding for mental health and addictions supports for in situ tenants of Community Housing.

## Background

It is evident that various supports are required for those individuals impacted by negative mental health and addictions to ensure successful tenancies and prevent evictions. The incidence of mental health and addictions is much higher in the District of Thunder Bay compared with the provincial average as demonstrated through the information in Appendix #1.

Research has shown that certain groups are more at risk for substance abuse related harms. These include people who have had adverse childhood experiences; people with mental health disorders; people with workplace injuries and older adults; youth who have a history of trauma or neglect; homeless people; people working in the sex trade; and indigenous people.

Many of the vulnerable populations cited above are represented in the Community Housing sector and as tenants in the private market. As a cross section of the broader population, it is reasonable to assume that incidence of mental health and addictions in the Community Housing tenant population occurs at a rate at least equal to the District as a whole. However, due to the circumstances faced by many Community Housing tenants, they find themselves preyed upon by drug dealers and criminals.

Over the past two years, TBDSSAB has seen several 'home take-overs' by drug dealers imposing themselves on our most vulnerable tenants. Unfortunately, this has become increasingly common in both Community Housing and the private rental market.

This situation is supported by recent statistics that show the incidence of crime rate per 100,000 increase by 13.86% in the Thunder Bay census metropolitan area (CMA) between 2018 and 2019. Home takeovers would be greatly reduced if those who experience mental health and addictions needs had appropriate in-home supports, and those with the most severe mental health and addictions needs had an appropriate care environment, with 24/7 supports to assist them in managing their lives.

Starting in 2016, TBDSSAB tracked the number of referrals for tenants involved in some type of presumed mental health and addiction issue. Approximately 409 of the referrals in 2019 were for such issues and this number increased to 427 in 2020. It is also estimated that an additional 100 referrals from the broader Community Housing sector were for mental health and addictions.



The number of referrals for mental health and addictions services has significantly increased year over year. The increasing incidences of mental health and addictions is costly for tenants and for Community Housing providers when these issues are not addressed due to heavily damaged units and home take overs by criminal elements.

Therefore, TBDSSAB requests that the Ministry of Health partner with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing to provide designated funding in the District of Thunder Bay for mental health and addictions supports for in situ tenants of community housing.

**Appendix #1****Mental Health and Addictions  
in the District of Thunder Bay**

The North West LHIN previously indicated that admission rates to inpatient adult mental health units is the 3rd highest in the province (33.7 per 1000 population compared to 24.9 per 1,000 population provincially).

The average length of stay in inpatient adult mental health units was the highest in the province at 34.9 days and the number of admissions to inpatient adult mental health units is the second highest in the province (671.1 per 100,000, compared to 511.7 per 100,000 population provincially). Additionally, Opioid-related morbidity and mortality in the District of Thunder Bay, like mental illness, occurs at a rate much higher than the provincial average.

**2020 Comparative Opioid-related morbidity and mortality in Ontario and the District of Thunder Bay, rate per 100,000 people**

	<b>Ontario</b>	<b>District of Thunder Bay</b>
Emergency Department Visits for Opioid Poisonings (rate per 100,000)	71.6	174.6
Hospitalization Rates for Opioid Poisonings (rate per 100,000)	13.6	24.6
Deaths from Opioid Poisonings (rate per 100,000)	10.3	41.4

*Source: Public Health Ontario, Interactive Opioid Tool*

Homelessness in the District of Thunder Bay is an issue of concern for the TBDSSAB, with 704 individuals currently active on the District of Thunder Bay By Name List (BNL). Of these, 66% identified as Indigenous and 70.9% of survey participants reported having an addiction.

According to the City of Thunder Bay Police Service Annual Report they responded to 51,400 calls for service in the past year and only 17% were related to criminal code offences. Of the total calls received, 4,305 were related to mental health and alcohol use. The number of mental health calls has increased each year (1,548 in 2018; 1,288 in 2017).

In addition, the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) Crisis Response fields approximately 3,500 calls per quarter, or approximately 14,000 calls annually. The Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre had 6,935 visits to the Emergency Department for mental health/substance related issues and the rate of 30-day repeat for mental health-related visits is 20% and substance use-related visits is 45%. The District of Thunder Bay has one of the highest percentages of people discharged from hospital to home who visit the ED within 30 days after discharge (19.9% compared to 13.2% provincial average). The North West LHIN indicated that the Rate of Emergency Department visits for mental health and addictions conditions is the highest in the province (48.1 visits per 1,000 population compared to 19.2 visits per 1,000 population).

Further, in 2019, the Balmoral Centre in Thunder Bay admitted 2,164 individuals into the residential withdrawal management program and was unable to accommodate an additional 2,555 individuals who had requested service as there was not any space available to serve them.

Dilico Anishinabek Family Care residential addictions program receives approximately 700 referrals per year but can only provide service to approximately 250 individuals per year. Dilico Anishinabek Family Care also offers pre-treatment and after care services in the city and in the District of Thunder Bay. The Thunder Bay Counselling Centre had approximately 950 individuals participate in community treatment and at that same time, 223 individuals were involved in case management services.

The Thunder Bay District Mental Health and Addictions Network recently advocated for an integrated mental health and addictions crisis centre in the City of Thunder Bay which will add capacity to existing community-based mental health and addictions services by ensuring people have access to the most appropriate level of care when

and where they need it. To adequately meet current community need, a 24-hour integrated mental health and addictions crisis centre with walk-in capacity will require 20 lower-threshold withdrawal management beds and an additional 20 crisis beds.



THE DISTRICT OF THUNDER BAY  
SOCIAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION BOARD

# Homelessness Prevention Funding

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## POSITION PAPER

**January 2022**

**Rural Ontario Municipalities Association (ROMA) Conference**

Prepared by:

The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board

Prepared for:

Hon. Steve Clark, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing

## Brief

The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board (TBDSSAB) appreciates and acknowledges the Home for Good (HFG), Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI), and Social Services Relief Fund (SSRF) funding allocations received this year and requests that the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing combine the HFG and CHPI allocations and increase the combined amount to \$5,440,093 and allow for capital projects to be funded through CHPI.

## Summary

The Emergency Shelters in the District of Thunder Bay have been over 100% capacity for the previous 5 years relying on overflow spaces to meet the demand for their services. The Emergency Shelters are funded through CHPI and despite the successful implementation of the Home for Good program, Emergency Shelter usage has stubbornly remained above 100% capacity. In order to build upon the success of the HFG program and reduce Emergency Shelter usage, the TBDSSAB requests that the MMAH combine the HFG and CHPI allocations and increase the combined funding amount to from \$4,812,590 to \$5,440,093. Further, it is requested that the MMAH allow capital projects to be funded through this combined program.

## Background

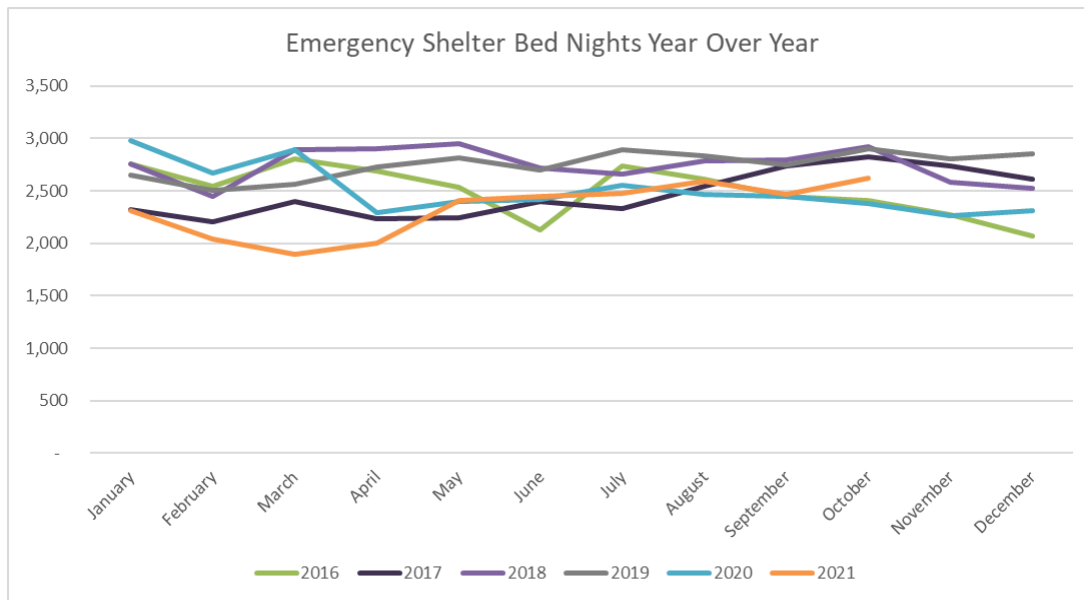
Through the HFG funding allocation, the TBDSSAB created a system to house homeless individuals and families with appropriate supports by utilizing a special category on the Community Housing waitlist called the High Needs Homeless (HNH).

The system works by the TBDSSAB Transition Outreach Support Workers (TOSW) attending the Emergency Shelters to assist the homeless to complete the Community Housing application as well as completing an initial Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool assessment to determine their support needs.

Once completed, and if determined eligible, the individual or family is placed on the HNH waitlist and a support referral is made to one of the HFG funded support agencies. TBDSSAB has established partnerships with Dilico Anishinabek Family Care and St. Joseph's Care Group to deliver support services. The HFG support workers, in partnership with the TOSW, work to stabilize their support needs and work to secure stable housing. Once an individual is established at the top of the HNH waitlist they may receive a unit within the Community Housing stock, a rent supplement unit or may receive a portable benefit funded through the HFG program. In circumstances where an individual is determined to need more time to adjust to independent living, they will be referred to the Lodge on Dawson, a transitional housing environment that was established through the capital component of the HFG funding.

The HFG program has been tremendously successful. In 2020, the HFG funding supported 176 households. Of this total, 92 individuals received both housing assistance and support services with HFG funding. This has resulted in housing chronic emergency shelter users into transitional or more permanent housing.

Despite the successful implementation of the HFG program, Emergency Shelter usage has remained above 100% capacity in the District of Thunder Bay, due to new users accessing the system.



Currently there are 80 individuals on the High Needs Homeless waitlist for HFG supports. With an increase in CHPI/HFG funding, the TBDSSAB will be able to support an additional 45-50 chronic homeless individuals and families, helping to achieve the province’s stated goal of addressing chronic homelessness.

Through the SSRF capital funding, more than \$2.9 million was invested in the District of Thunder Bay to address the needs of establishing and maintaining safe shelter for those most in need. Allowing more funding for capital through CHPI would provide for increased transitional housing capacity, eventually leading to a reduced need operationally for emergency shelters as TBDSSAB addresses more permanent measures for the chronically homeless.

Further, providing additional CHPI funding and allowing capital expenditures permit TBDSSAB to leverage federal funding programs like the Rapid Housing Initiative (RHI) to create more local transitional/supportive housing solutions. The RHI was initiated this past year, but there was not a significant availability of funds for Service Managers in smaller areas, and without sufficient capital to create capacity in transitional and permanent housing, the homeless issue will continue.



Therefore, TBDSSAB requests that the MMAH combine the HFG and CHPI allocations and increase the combined amount to \$5,440,093, and allow for capital projects to be funded through CHPI.