



BOARD REPORT

REPORT No.: 2022-05

MEETING DATE: FEBRUARY 17, 2022

SUBJECT: SOCIAL SERVICES RELIEF FUND UPDATE

RECOMMENDATION

For information only.

REPORT SUMMARY

To provide The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board (TBDSSAB or the Board) with an update regarding the TBDSSAB's spending under the Social Services Relief Fund (SSRF).

BACKGROUND

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Ontario announced a new \$200 million Social Services Relief Fund (SSRF) to assist Service Managers address community needs and pressures. At the April 16, 2020 meeting, the Board was presented information on TBDSSAB's allocation of \$1,168,300 under this fund (Report No.: 2020-19).

At the September 17, 2020 meeting, the Board was presented with information on the SSRF Phase 2 funding, which extended efforts to mitigate the ongoing risk for vulnerable people impacted by COVID, and established a new capital funding initiative to encourage long-term housing-based solutions to homelessness post-COVID-19 (Report No.: 2020-35). Under SSRF Phase 2, TBDSSAB was allocated \$1,840,459 of which \$1,155,000 was allocated to capital projects with the remaining \$630,245 allocated to operations expenses and an administration allowance.

At the January 14, 2021 meeting, the Board was presented with a report confirming an additional SSRF Phase 2 funding allocation of \$1,836,300 that was made available to support additional capital project investment (Report No.: 2021-02). A total of \$1,781,300 was allocated to capital projects, with the remaining amount allocated as an administration allowance.

At the March 18, 2021 meeting, the Board was presented with a report outlining new, one-time mental health and addictions funding to be allocated to select Service Managers and Indigenous Program Administrators under existing program agreements (Report No.: 2021-10). An allocation of \$1,040,046 was provided to TBDSSAB to

support a range of mental health and addictions-related supports and services. This flexible funding was aimed at addressing the pandemic needs of vulnerable people living with mental health and/or addictions issues and was to be used for eligible operating activities within our service area.

Also at the March 18, 2021 meeting, the Board was provided with initial information on the SSRF Phase 3, and at the April 15, 2021 meeting the Board was presented with a report confirming the allocation to TBDSSAB of \$2,422,782 and the eligibility of projects and initiatives for these funds (Report No. 2021-17). In this report, Administration identified key areas of support targeted for the Phase 3 funding. These included rent and arrears support, 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. Subsequent updates were provided at each monthly Board meeting, identifying the areas where investment of the SSRF funding was made. As of December 31, 2021, the entire SSRF Phase 3 funding had been allocated.

COMMENTS

The SSRF Phase 3 funding implementation began April 1, following the approval of the TBDSSAB investment plan by MMAH. A key area of support under the Phase 3 funding is rent supports to assist those impacted by the pandemic where rent and utility arrears may result in homelessness. Under the Phase 3 funding, it was anticipated that 250 households may be supported by year end. Information on this support has been broadly shared with community partners, to assist in identifying those in need. The demand for this support has been greater than initially estimated, and some additional funding has been moved into this support area from other less utilized areas. As of December 31, 399 households have been assisted with funding totalling \$1,031,411.

TBDSSAB continues to provide 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, community outreach, food, transportation, supports, PPE, cleaning supplies and health and safety costs. Through December 31, 18 applications totalling \$541,848 have been approved.

TBDSSAB continues to address the safety and support of tenants in TBDSSAB owned properties as well as those in non-profit owned properties supported through the community housing system. This includes the provision of cleaning services and supplies, additional security for screening and the provision of PPE. Through December 31, \$416,406 has been expended under Phase 3 funding for these uses.

From the beginning of the pandemic, additional stressors have been placed on the emergency shelter system. 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 to overflow emergency shelters - temporary spaces provided to facilitate overnight shelter when access to emergency shelters is limited. Overflow emergency shelters utilize approved space offered and operated by community support organizations, as well as motel spaces as required. There has been limited demand for overflow emergency shelter space through the latter part of 2021. TBDSSAB supported the creation of 6 new shelter spaces for women, which helps to address the need. A total of \$122,496 has been expended from SSRF Phase 3 in this area through December 31. St. Joseph's Care Group continues to fund the needs for an isolation shelter in Thunder Bay, utilizing funding from the Public Health Alliance of Canada.

As an update, the following chart outlines all the SSRF Phases 1 through 3 and Mental Health and Addictions funding expended by TBDSSAB through December 31, 2021. The total SSRF Phase 3 allocation of \$2,422,782 has been fully utilized. The SSRF Phase 4 amounts are expended or committed as of January 31, 2022.

	Mental Health & Addictions	SSRF Phases 1 & 2 (incl Holdback)	SSRF Phase 3	SSRF Phase 4 (YTD & Committed)	Total
Capital Community Support	-	2,939,438	-	2,900,000	5,839,438
Applications	727,709	275,694	541,848	35,166	1,580,417
Isolation Shelter	15,536	923,823	227,753	-	1,167,112
Overflow Shelter	-	228,000	122,496	17,450	367,946
Supports to Housing Providers	-	26,873	-	-	26,873
Rent and Other Supports	50,419	272,290	1,031,411	-	1,354,120
Communication & Technology	215,364	32,610	10,368	-	258,342
Security	-	287,621	305,907	-	593,528
Additional Cleaning and PPE	-	87,039	110,499	-	197,538
Administration	31,018	143,854	72,500	-	247,372
Expenditure Subtotal	\$ 1,040,046	\$ 5,217,242	\$ 2,422,782	\$ 2,952,616	\$ 11,632,686
Recoveries 2021 Operating Surplus	-	-	-	409,272	409,272
Anishnawbe Mushkiki	-	(55,000)	-	-	(55,000)
Reaching Home Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative	-	(24,319)	-	-	(24,319)
	-	(272,864)	-	-	(272,864)
Total	\$ 1,040,046	\$ 4,865,059	\$ 2,422,782	\$ 2,543,344	\$ 10,871,231

At the November 17, 2021 meeting, the Board was provided information on the details of the SSRF Phase 4 funding provided through the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. This information was shared in Closed Session, as the announcement of the SSRF Phase 4 funding was not yet made public. A total of \$2,722,400 was allocated to TBDSSAB. SSRF Phase 4 funding is to be fully allocated by March 31, 2022.

As the needs and pressures related to COVID continue to develop, the amounts identified in the Phase 4 investment plan may be adjusted. The objective is to utilize the available funds in the most impactful manner.

STRATEGIC PLAN IMPACT

Although the Social Services Relief Fund was not identified in the Strategic Plan, it does meet the strategic directions of Investment, Partnerships and Advocacy. The investments have provided supports and protection to the citizens within the District of Thunder Bay in addressing the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. There are several long-term impacts realized through the investment in capital projects, resulting in additional transitional housing and emergency shelter spaces.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Social Services Relief Fund is a 100% provincially funded program, although recoveries from other sources were realized during Phase 2 and Phase 4. TBDSSAB has allocated \$409,272 from the 2021 budget surplus to augment investment in SSRF Phase 4 capital projects (Report No.: 2021CS-10; Resolution No.21/79). The one-time Mental Health and Addictions funding is a 100% provincially funded initiative.



TBDSSAB was 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 updated information on the SSRF and Mental Health and Addictions funding received through the province of Ontario. Further updates on SSRF Phase 4 will be presented in future meetings.

REFERENCE MATERIALS

None

PREPARED BY:	Crystal Simeoni, Manager, Housing Programs
SIGNATURE	
APPROVED BY	Ken Ranta, Director, Integrated Social Services Division
SIGNATURE	
SUBMITTED BY:	William (Bill) Bradica, Chief Administrative Officer