



BOARD REPORT

REPORT No.: 2022-26

MEETING DATE: MAY 19, 2022

SUBJECT: CANADA-ONTARIO COMMUNITY HOUSING INITIATIVE, ONTARIO PRIORITIES HOUSING INITIATIVE AND CANADA - ONTARIO HOUSING BENEFIT AMENDMENT 2022-23

RECOMMENDATION

THAT with respect to Report No. 2022-26 (Integrated Social Services Division) we, The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board (the Board), authorize the Chair and the Chief Administrative Officer, to execute the Transfer Payment Amending Agreement for the Canada-Ontario Community Housing Initiative and the Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative;

AND THAT the Board approve the 2022-23 Investment Plan for the Canada-Ontario Community Housing Initiative and the Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative programs and authorize the Chief Administrative Officer to execute the plan and submit to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing;

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 related to the continuation of the Canada-Ontario Community Housing Initiative (COCHI) and the Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative (OPHI), and to approve the proposed Investment Plan for the 2022-23 funding year.

BACKGROUND

On April 17, 2019, The Honourable Steve Clark, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, addressed a letter to the TBDSSAB Board Chair announcing the government's Community Housing Renewal Strategy – a multi-year plan to sustain and grow the community housing system. As part of this strategy, two new programs were launched in 2019-20 leveraging federal investments under the bilateral agreement between the

Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) and the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. Guidelines for these new programs were also introduced.

The COCHI represents a re-investment of federal funding allowing Service Managers to address the challenges associated with housing projects reaching the end of their mortgages and/or operating agreements. COCHI funds are targeted towards protecting affordability for households in community housing, supporting the repair and renewal of existing social housing supply and expanding the supply of community housing. Housing projects and providers are eligible for COCHI funding as long as they are social housing providers that are listed in the *Housing Services Act, 2011* as of April 1, 2019. In addition, the COCHI guidelines require the preservation of Urban Native Housing (UNH) units to ensure there is no net loss of units with adequate rental affordability. COCHI funding must be used in addition to existing municipal subsidy for social housing expenditures – COCHI funding cannot be used to offset municipal social housing expenditures.

The OPHI is modeled after the recent Investment in Affordable Housing Extension (IAH-E) and allows Service Managers to address local housing priorities including affordability, repair, and new unit construction. Initiatives including rent supplements, housing allowances and housing development and repair remain. Under the OPHI Program Guidelines, Service Managers have the flexibility to select the components they will deliver each year under their approved funding allocations. Service Managers may be stand-alone project proponents under the Rental Housing component. Additional features include the ability to offer a support services component and utilize OPHI funding for social housing under the Ontario Renovates program.

The Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit Program aims to give more options to people who are looking for housing that will meet their needs and their budgets. The program offers a portable housing benefit where funding is provided directly to low-income households that are on, or eligible to be on, a social housing waitlist. The benefit is calculated using 80% of the community's Average Market Rent (AMR), as determined by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation analysis, and 30% of the household's Adjusted Family Net Income (AFNI). Individuals currently receiving social assistance benefits may be eligible, however they will have a separate benefit calculation to avoid reducing their current social assistance entitlements. The Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit is provincially delivered through the MMAH and the Ministry of Finance (MOF). The MOF determines eligibility, calculates the benefit, provides payments directly to households and manages the annual renewal process. Service Managers assist by identifying and selecting households to apply for the program and assisting households with the application process.

TBDSSAB entered into an initial Transfer Payment Agreement (TPA) with the province to participate in the COCHI and OPHI programs in 2019. The TPA included an Investment Plan which outlined how the annual COCHI and OPHI funding would be used over the first 3-year funding period (2019-20 to 2021-22).

COMMENTS

With the initial COCHI funding allocations, TBDSSAB has focused investment in the areas of repair of existing community housing properties and in the provision of rent supplements and transitional operating funding to maintain Urban Native Housing units where the mortgages and operating agreements have expired. Repairs on TBDSSAB-owned community housing units were completed at 15 housing properties with the initial COCHI funding, as well as \$360,000 invested with Lakehead Christian Senior Citizens Apartments Inc. for updates to their community housing property in Thunder Bay. Further, rent supplements and transitional operating funding were arranged with expiring housing units owned by Geraldton Native Housing Corporation and Native People of Thunder Bay Development Corporation, maintaining 77 housing units available in the system.

With the initial OPHI funding allocations, TBDSSAB has focused investment on capital investment in new rental housing, and continued investment in the Ontario Renovates program. This included the investment of \$750,000 for the creation of 6 new fully accessible apartments in vacant commercial space located at the TBDSSAB-owned McIvor Court in Thunder Bay. Further, 82 low-income home owners were supported through Ontario Renovates between 2019 and 2021.

Following a review of the revised Program Guidelines accompanying the 2022-23 funding allocation, it is determined that most of the program parameters remain the same. However, there are some new requirements including enhanced communications regarding COCHI, the opportunity to invest COCHI funds in the development of new rental construction, and enhanced rationale required for allocations in the Investment Plan and ongoing reporting requirements. Eligible new rental projects must be developed by non-profits, co-operatives, municipalities or DSSABs. Projects proposed by or in partnership with private sector proponents are not eligible for COCHI new build funding. Administration is preparing an Expression of Interest to be released in 2022 to ascertain need and interest in new rental development throughout the District. Information gathered through this process will guide investment recommendations in future years.

Funding allocations are provided on a “use it or lose it” basis. For operating components, all funds must be disbursed to the recipient in the program year in which the funding was committed. Funds not committed by the required timelines may be reallocated to other Service Managers as funding from one year cannot be allocated by the Province to future years.

Service Managers may use up to five percent of each of their annual COCHI and OPHI funding allocations to assist with the administration costs for delivering the respective initiatives.

Administration has reviewed the funding letter and new guidelines and has prepared a draft Investment Plan, presented as Attachment #2. As the COCHI and OPHI funding allocations are the same as provided in the 2021-22 year, the recommended allocations remain the same for the 2022-23 year.

The Investment Plan presented proposes to utilize COCHI to maintain Urban Native Housing units that have Operating Agreements set to expire and would otherwise be removed from the housing system. Further, it is proposed that the remaining COCHI funding be utilized for capital repair to social housing projects across the portfolio, as well as initial work on undertaking Building Condition Assessments for all properties in the portfolio, as well as non-profit providers. Eligible capital repairs may include replacing and/or repairing core building systems, and sub-systems (e.g., heating and/or cooling, leaking roof systems, water issues, structural repairs, etc.); and health and safety repairs (e.g., accessibility renovations). With enhanced COCHI funding allocations anticipated in future years, the opportunity to use this funding for new rental housing development will be entertained.

For the OPHI program, Administration is recommending to use most of allocation for the Ontario Renovates program. There is also an administrative amount. The Ontario Renovates program has been very well received throughout the District of Thunder Bay, and demand shows the continued need for this area of investment. Service Manager's may move funding from one OPHI component to another within the same program year if the original planned commitment for funding cannot be met, providing approval from MMAH is received.

STRATEGIC PLAN IMPACT

This program supports the strategic plan vision of establishing flexible, inclusive services through the provision of relevant diverse housing supports. The program supports the success of the people we serve.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

As outlined in the April 7, 2022 letter from Minister Clark, funding from the Ministry is confirmed for the 2022-23 fiscal year. The allocations are as follows:

Canada-Ontario Community Housing Initiative	\$ 2,921,670
Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative	\$ 909,900
Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit	\$ 502,400

The funding provided is 100% Federal and Provincial funding. This funding will be provided upon approval of the COCHI-OPHI Investment Plan, for the April 1, 2022 – March 31, 2023 funding year.

As part of the Investment Plan, Service Managers may use up to 5% of each of their annual COCHI and OPHI funding allocations to assist with administration costs for the delivery of the initiatives.



CONCLUSION

It is concluded that this Report provides the Board with information with respect to the COCHI, the OPHI, and the funding available to TBDSSAB for the 2022-23 year. It is recommended that the Board authorize the Chair and the Chief Administrative Officer to execute the Transfer Payment Amendment Agreement for the 2022-23 funding and submit this Agreement and the Investment Plan to the MMAH.

REFERENCE MATERIALS

Attachment #1 [Letter from the Honourable Steve Clark, MMAH dated April 27, 2022](#)

Attachment #2 [COCHI-OPHI Investment Plan 2022-23](#)

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

**Ministry of
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April 27, 2022

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

Dear Lucy Kloosterhuis:

I am pleased to provide you an update on the 2022-23 roll out of the Canada-Ontario Community Housing Initiative (COCHI), the Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative (OPHI) and the Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit (COHB) programs.

Even though the fiscal year has already begun, the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation has still not yet agreed to the final details of a renewed Action Plan under the National Housing Strategy for 2022-23.

While we anticipate this will happen shortly, I would ask you to join me in reaching out to the Federal government and asking that they approve the renewed Action Plan for 2022-23 quickly. In addition, as our government continues to advocate for Ontario's fair share of federal funding for housing programs, I would also ask that you join us in our efforts to secure this critical funding by reaching out to the Federal government and asking for Ontario's fair share.

In the interim, to ensure stability and continuity of the housing programs upon which so many Ontarians depend, the Ministry is proceeding with implementation consistent with past practice and with the planning allocations provided to all Service Managers in August of last year.

Your confirmed 2022-23 NHS allocations for the interim period are attached to this letter as Appendix "A" and remain unchanged from the allocations communicated to you in August 2021. The key program design elements for the 2022-23 period have also remained unchanged. Please find enclosed the template for amending the relevant Transfer Payment Agreements, the Program Guidelines and Investment Plan for further details.

To ensure Service Managers and Indigenous Program Administrators are well-positioned to move forward with implementation in the 2022-23 year, we are requesting that the signed Transfer Payment Agreement (TPA) and Investment Plan be returned to the Ministry **as soon as possible but no later than May 31, 2022**. In recognition of the relatively late start of this process and to ensure continuity and stability of programming, you will note the Transfer Payment Agreement has already been signed by the Crown and will take effect upon execution by the service manager/Indigenous Program Administrator. We strongly encourage service managers and IPAs to return executed TPAs and approved Investment Plans to the Ministry to facilitate flow of funding.

Upon finalization of the Transfer Payment agreement and receipt of your Investment Plan, the Ministry will proceed to initiate your first payment based on your first quarter cash flow requirements as outlined in the Investment Plan, up to a maximum amount of 50% of your total allocation. You may submit your signed agreement and Investment Plan via e-mail to housingprogramsdelivery@ontario.ca.

My expectation is that you continue to administer NHS housing programs as usual, and that there is no interruption to housing services and supports. I trust this letter provides the certainty you need to proceed. If you have any questions, please contact ministry staff at your regional Municipal Services Office.

We sincerely appreciate your efforts to assist vulnerable people in your communities, and I look forward to continuing our work together as we move forward on these important changes.

Sincerely,



Steve Clark
Minister

Enclosures

- c. William Bradica, Chief Administrative Officer
- William Bradica, CAO
- Jessica Vail, Team Lead, Municipal Services Office

Appendix "A"

2022-23 Fiscal Year Confirmed Funding Allocations – Thunder Bay DSSAB

Program	2022-23 Confirmed Allocations
Canada-Ontario Community Housing Initiative (COCHI)	\$2,921,670
Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative (OPHI)	\$909,900
Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit (COHB)	\$502,400

Appendix "B"
Transfer Payment Agreement

Please see attached.