



THE DISTRICT OF THUNDER BAY  
SOCIAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION BOARD

# HPP Funding & Allocation

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## POSITION PAPER

**August 2022**

**Association of Municipalities of Ontario 2022 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 amalgamation of the Home for Good (HFG), Strong Communities Rent Supplement Program and Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI) funding allocations and the increased flexibility allowed under the Homelessness Prevention Program (HPP). However, the **TBDSSAB urges the MMAH to increase the TBDSSAB allocation to at least \$6,194,503, revise the current allocation methodology utilized for HPP allotment, and to hold the allowable administration level at 7.5%.**

## Summary

In order to build upon the success of the former HFG and SSRF programs and reduce the number of emergency shelter bed nights used by people experiencing chronic homelessness, the TBDSSAB urges the MMAH to increase the HPP funding amount to at least \$6,194,903 to allow the TBDSSAB to expand transitional services for those experiencing chronic homelessness. Further, it is requested that the MMAH revise the current utilization methodology utilized for the HPP allotment.

## Background

Through the former 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 (SPDAT) 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 a HNH funded support agency. These supports were previously funded through HFG and will continue to be funded through HPP.

TBDSSAB has established partnerships with Dilico Anishinabek Family Care and St. Joseph's Care Group to deliver support services. The HNH 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 HPP 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 former HFG funding.

From inception, the Home for Good program has housed 249 individuals. As of March 2022, 70 individuals are receiving a portable HFG subsidy. 82 clients are provided with case management services through the HFG support staff from Dilico and SJCG. As this is a transitional housing and support program, individuals do progress on to more independent living, often receiving rent supports from TBDSSAB.

Since Fall 2021, TBDSSAB has worked in partnership with Elevate NWO through the Social Services Relief Fund (SSRF) to support 41 individuals who were living in encampment-style or precarious housing environments. This partnership evolved into housing 25 individuals in cluster units in TBDSSAB housing with supports in place, and 12 individuals gaining employment at Elevate's warming centre. TBDSSAB also partnered with Matawa's WiiChiiHehWayWin street outreach program to provide more than 1,691 people with much needed supports and outreach services.

In addition, through recent investment from the SSRF TBDSSAB has realized the establishment of 51 new/planned transitional housing spaces. SSRF funding allowed for partnerships to be identified for the operational functions while TBDSSAB supported the capital development.

Despite the successful implementation of the HFG program and the strategic investments through the SSRF, people experiencing chronic homelessness have accounted for 22% of the emergency shelter bed nights used in 2022. In addition, there are 85 individuals on the HNH waitlist for HNH supports. With the requested increase in HPP funding of \$627,103, the TBDSSAB will be able to support an additional 45-50<sup>1</sup> chronic homeless individuals and families, helping to achieve the province's stated goal of addressing chronic homelessness.

In addition, the TBDSSAB encourages MMAH to adjust the methodology used to allocate the available HPP funds. The TBDSSAB suggests that the By-Name List number adjusted for population should be the primary indicator for the allocation of funding.

The MMAH should also take into consideration additional funding for Service Managers with rural and remote locations. Rural and remote communities do not typically have the purpose-built infrastructure to accommodate homeless populations. In these cases, more expensive options exist such as motel stays for the homeless. This costs more than the cost of a stay at a designated emergency shelter. The TBDSSAB's Point in Time Count showed a high number of homeless individuals in several the smaller locations across the District of Thunder Bay. Therefore, additional funding, beyond the \$627,103 being requested today, would also be needed to provide supports to individuals in other communities in the TBDSSAB service area. Currently most of the homeless prevention service effort is concentrated in the City of Thunder Bay and TBDSSAB is using a portion of the SSRF Phase 5 to determine the level of service that is needed in the other 14 communities in the District of Thunder Bay.

Further, the high prevalence of mental health and addictions issues in the North contribute to challenges in stabilizing homeless individuals and accessing appropriate supports.

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<sup>1</sup> Estimated number of individuals that can be supported is based on the cost to support and house an individual through the former HFG program.

The TBDSSAB's 2016, 2018, and 2021 PiT Counts all showed very high incidences of mental health and addictions amongst the homeless population.

In addition, the former North West LHIN (now Ontario Health North) had 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. Further, 54% of residents aged 19 and older exceed at least one of Canada's Low-Risk Alcohol Drinking Guidelines, compared to the 44% average for Ontario.<sup>2</sup>

Addressing poor mental health and addictions is key to building successful tenancies for those currently homeless. Additional consideration of these pressures should be included in the allocation methodology. These factors should be considered in a new HPP allocation methodology.

The TBDSSAB also urges the MMAH to reconsider the reduction of the allowable HPP administration from 7.5% to 5%. The allowable HPP administration percentage has decreased from 10% to 7.5% in this current funding year and is announced to be further reduced to 5% in 2022-23. This reduction results in fewer resources available to Service Managers to deliver the HPP program and results in a download on the municipalities in the District of Thunder Bay to continue to ensure staffing levels are sufficient to deliver the provincially funded programs.

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<sup>2</sup> Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion (Public Health Ontario). Snapshots: Alcohol Use Snapshot: Self-reported rate of exceeding either low-risk alcohol drinking guideline, accessed June 9, 2022.

Therefore, TBDSSAB urges the MMAH to increase the TBDSSAB's HPP allocation to at least \$6,194,503, revise the current allocation methodology utilized for HPP allotment, and allow Service Manager's to utilize up to 7.5% of the HPP allocation for administration costs.