



BOARD REPORT

REPORT No.: 2023-04

MEETING DATE: FEBRUARY 16, 2023

SUBJECT: SOCIAL SERVICES RELIEF FUND FINAL 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 regarding TBDSSAB's investments under the Social Services Relief Fund (SSRF) Phases 1 through 5.

BACKGROUND

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

At the September 17, 2020, Board meeting, Administration presented information on the SSRF Phase 2 funding, which extended efforts to mitigate the ongoing risk and challenges 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 used for capital projects with the remaining \$630,245 used for services, supplies and an administration allowance.

At the January 14, 2021, Board meeting, Administration presented a report confirming a further 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, Board meeting, Administration provided initial information on the SSRF Phase 3 and at the April 15, 2021 meeting, the Board received a report

confirming the allocation to TBDSSAB of \$2,422,782 under SSRF Phase 3 and the eligibility of projects and initiatives for these funds (Report No.: 2021-17).

At the November 17, 2021, Board meeting, Administration provided information on the SSRF Phase 4 funding (Report No.: 2021CS-10). A total of \$2,722,400 was allocated to TBDSSAB, with both operating services and capital projects eligible under this funding. This SSRF Phase 4 funding was to be the final SSRF allocation, and a wind-down plan was to be prepared and submitted stating how TBDSSAB would move forward with programs and services at the completion of the Phase 4 funding period, stated as March 31, 2022.

On April 7, 2022, TBDSSAB received notification announcing a fifth phase of the province's SSRF funding. This information was presented to the Board at the April 21, 2022, meeting (Report No.: 2022CS-06). Under SSRF Phase 5, funding was to be used to support operating services and capital expenses to mitigate the continued impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the homeless sector. Funding was to be used for eligible expenses between April 1, 2022, and December 31, 2022. TBDSSAB received \$1,201,600 for this period.

COMMENTS

Under all phases of SSRF, TBDSSAB continued to provide support to community groups through the establishment of the Community Support - Emergency Pandemic Fund, an application-based initiative that looked to address pressures in all communities through supporting organizations in directly meeting the needs of the most vulnerable. Eligible expenses through the Emergency Pandemic Fund included shelter, community outreach and support, food, transportation, PPE, cleaning supplies, and health and safety costs. TBDSSAB funded organizations, some for more than one initiative, with a total expenditure of \$1,048,007.

SSRF Approved Funding Applications 2020-2023

Organization	Proposal	Communities Served	Amount
Boys and Girls Club	Food security for vulnerable community	Thunder Bay	5,000
Community Clothing Assistance	Clothing, hygiene items, PPE, and transportation for vulnerable community (2 approved applications)	Thunder Bay	19,660
Elevate NWO	Food, clothing, supplies, accommodation, transportation for vulnerable community (3 approved applications)	Thunder Bay	161,999

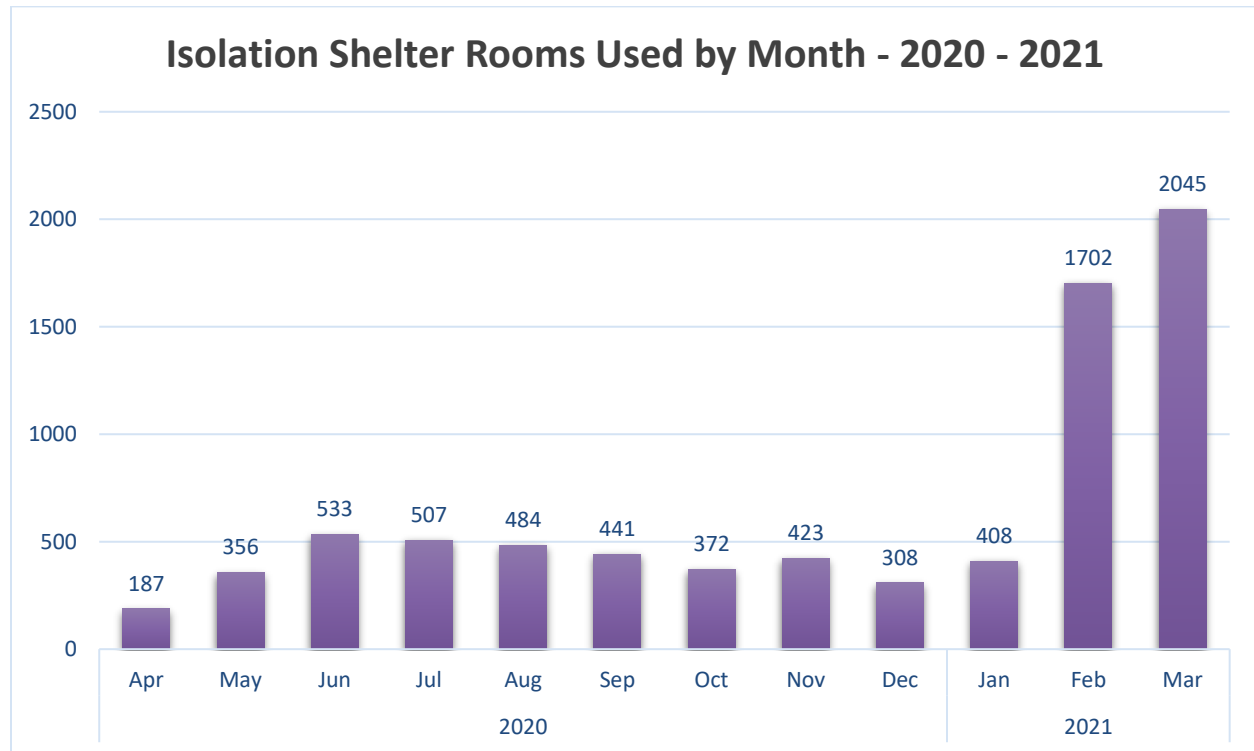
Elizabeth Fry Society of Northwestern Ontario	Food, clothing, hygiene items, PPE for clients; relocation of transitional housing program to 4-bedroom apartment (2 approved applications)	Thunder Bay	36,781
Geraldton Composite High School	Backpack nutrition program	Greenstone	3,200
Grace Ministries	Provide isolation shelter staffing 24/7 (5 approved applications, net of \$819 returned)	Thunder Bay	153,063
Greenstone Harvest Centre	Food security for vulnerable community	Greenstone	3,000
Indigenous Youth Friendship Society o/a Thunder Bay Indigenous Friendship Centre	Food, PPE, winter clothing for vulnerable community	Thunder Bay	37,500
John Howard Society of Thunder Bay and District	Client Support Worker to support vulnerable community; purchase of winter clothing and footwear to provide to individuals released from custody (4 approved applications)	Thunder Bay	51,396
Lutheran Community Care Centre	Food, transportation, accommodation for individuals referred to community services (4 approved applications)	Thunder Bay	118,192
Manitouwadge Municipal Housing Corporation	PPE, COVID-19 cleaning expenses	Manitouwadge	14,070
Marathon Community Collective	Food, clothing, supplies, accommodation, transportation, support services	Marathon	4,500
Marjorie House	Food security for vulnerable community (3 approved applications)	Marathon	52,100
Matawa First Nations	Support services in the areas of prevention, intervention, coordination, and services navigation (3 approved applications)	Thunder Bay	144,253
Nipigon Red Rock District High School	Food security for vulnerable community (2 approved applications)	Nipigon/Red Rock	7,975

North of Superior Healthcare Group	Offer programming and supports to tenants (4 approved applications)	Marathon	19,032
Northwestern Ontario Women's Centre	Good Food Box program	Thunder Bay	29,882
Norwest Community Health Centre	Food and transportation for vulnerable community	Thunder Bay	26,176
PACE	Extend the hours of the PACE Safe Space Warming Centre (2 approved applications)	Thunder Bay	30,866
Rural Cupboard Food Bank	PPE and personal hygiene items	Conmee	50,000
Salvation Army	Social distancing measures, enhanced screening, maintaining good nutrition and hygiene (2 approved applications)	Thunder Bay	9,781
Shkoday Abinojjiwak Obimiwedoan	Food security for vulnerable community	Thunder Bay	4,500
Urban Abbey	Provide illness isolation space and support to homeless; provide 10 bed women's shelter (3 approved applications)	Thunder Bay	64,289
Various Small Organizations	Transportation, hygiene materials, PPE	Thunder Bay	792
Total			1,048,007

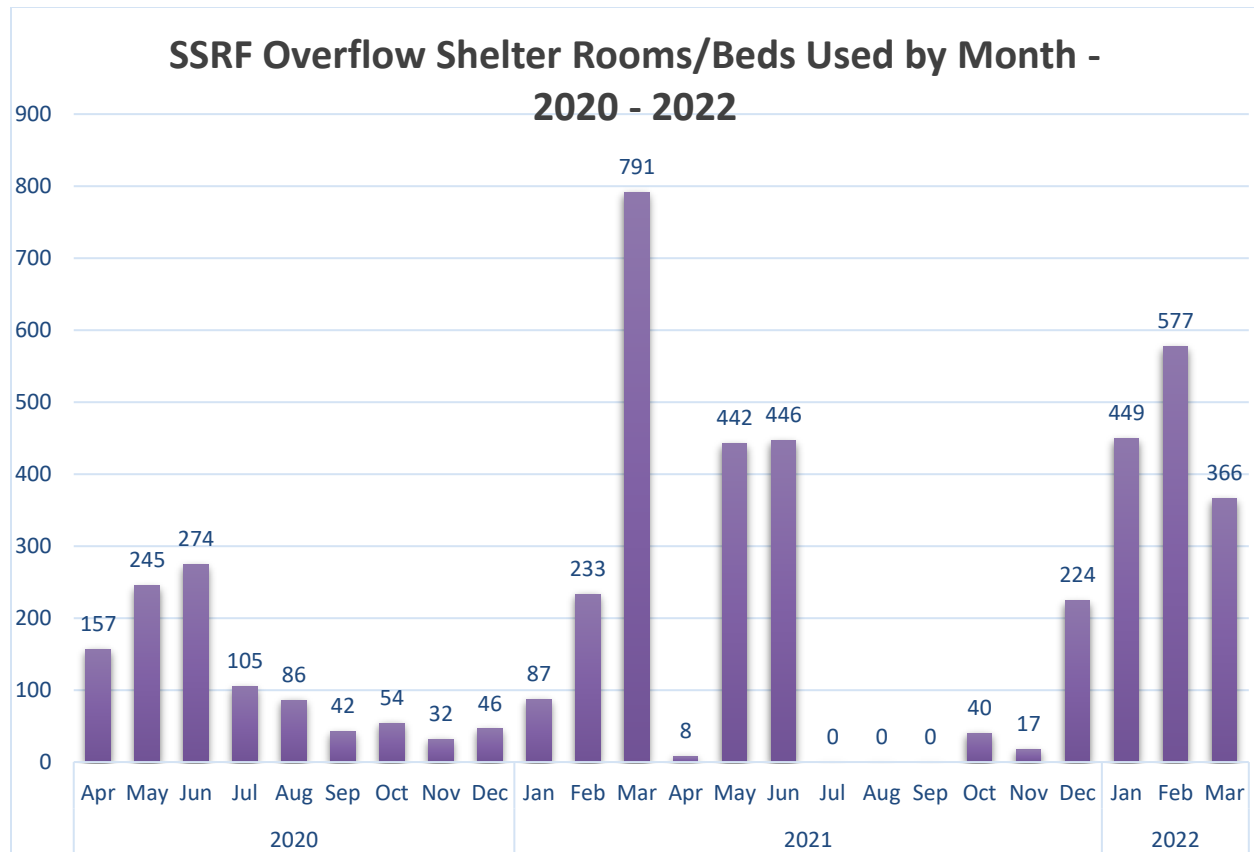
One initiative supported under this fund is the WiiChiiHehWayWin Outreach Program delivered by Matawa First Nations Management. This program aims to provide coordination and assistance in the areas of prevention, intervention, and navigation of services on behalf of members of the nine Matawa First Nation communities, as well as other non-members requiring assistance. The program provides Outreach Services in the City of Thunder Bay for homeless and vulnerable members, and provides food, clothing, supports and access to health care, shelter, and other treatment.

TBDSSAB was one of the lead partners in establishing an isolation shelter facility to address the vulnerable population and the need to provide safe, supported isolation services due to COVID. From the initial set-up of the isolation shelter in April 2020 through March 31, 2021, TBDSSAB covered the cost of rooms (over 100 rooms/night at the peak of the crisis) and at times, staffing, security, and meals. This support included isolation space in communities throughout the District of Thunder Bay. Once federal funding from Public Health Alliance of Canada began to flow directly to St. Joseph's

Care Group, the need for SSRF funds to support isolation space in the City of Thunder Bay was reduced. However, support of isolation sheltering needs continued in other communities throughout the District. Through all phases of the SSRF funding, TBDSSAB has facilitated the operation of isolation shelter spaces for homeless individuals who required separation from the general population due to possible exposure to the virus while monitoring symptoms. Under SSRF, a total of \$1,151,576 was expended by TBDSSAB on isolation sheltering.



From the beginning of the pandemic, additional stressors were placed on the emergency shelter system. Reduced capacity to meet public health guidelines and the need to restrict access under static bed lists resulted in TBDSSAB providing funding to overflow emergency shelters - temporary spaces provided to facilitate overnight shelter when access to existing emergency shelters was limited. Overflow emergency shelters utilized approved spaces offered and operated by community support organizations, as well as motel spaces as required. From April 1, 2020 through March 31, 2022, a total of 4,721 overflow shelter bed nights were needed throughout the District, with a total cost of \$407,022. Through this investment, individuals requiring access to emergency sheltering space were sheltered, provided appropriate supports, and opportunities were provided to access additional supports to transition out of homelessness.



TBDSSAB continued 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 included the provision of cleaning services and supplies, additional security for screening and the provision of personal protective equipment (PPE). Ten non-profit housing providers requested assistance in sourcing PPE and over 7,000 pieces of PPE were provided. An example of the additional security measures that were provided was at Spence Court (230 West Amelia Street, Thunder Bay) where additional 24/7 on-site security and roving patrols were added to mitigate individuals wandering the property, to promote social distancing and to encourage PPE use. Additional cleaning and security support was also established at the TBDSSAB headquarters to support the safety of staff and those accessing the office for supports. Through all phases of SSRF, a total of \$1,097,643 was allocated in these funding categories to help support the health and safety of tenants and those who support them.

Rent supports to assist those impacted by the pandemic, where rent and utility arrears may result in homelessness, was another area of priority under SSRF. This support has been broadly shared with community partners, to assist in identifying those households in need. Through all phases of SSRF, a total of \$1,518,869 was provided to 534 households to assist with arrears and to maintain housing. This support had a measurable impact on a household’s ability to remain housed through the pandemic pressures. One example of feedback from a recipient stated:

“I wanted to tell you thank you, from the very bottom of my heart. I do not know what we would have done about Christmas, rent or anything else for that matter. I understand it was a one-time thing, but it was something we desperately needed. Because you were able to help my family with so much, we are now able to thrive here and make a life for ourselves.”

SSRF Phase 2, Phase 4 and Phase 5 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. Through Phase 2, TBDSSAB dedicated a total of \$2,939,438 towards 7 capital project initiatives. All projects related to improvements in the physical structure to expand transitional housing spaces and housing supports and to reduce the impact of COVID-19 spread and protect the safety of individuals. A total of 20 new transitional housing spaces were created in Phase 2, partnering with Matawa First Nations and Dilico Anishinabek Family Care, and 6 new emergency shelter spaces were created with Urban Abbey. Additionally, capital improvement projects were undertaken with Marjorie House (Marathon), Grace Place, and John Howard Society to improve safety and service access for the vulnerable population they serve.

In SSRF Phase 4, capital investment totalling \$2,490,728 was invested with Matawa First Nations (21 new rooms) and Dilico Anishinabek Family Care (10 new rooms with 20 beds) to create 41 new transitional housing spaces to assist those requiring supports as they transition into more independent living.

Finally, under Phase 5, TBDSSAB partnered with Elizabeth Fry Society for the purchase of a property that established 7 new transitional housing spaces along with supports. An additional \$140,250 from Phase 5 was invested with Dilico to support the creation of the 20 beds noted above in Phase 4.

The following chart outlines all the SSRF Phases, 1 through 5, expended or committed by TBDSSAB from April 1, 2020, through December 31, 2022:

Description	SSRF Phases 1-5
Capital*	\$ 6,339,438
Community Support Applications	1,048,007
Isolation Shelter	1,151,576
Overflow Shelter	407,022
Supports to Housing Providers	26,873
Rent and Other Supports	1,518,869
Personnel Services	33,737
Communications & Technology	42,978
Security	871,768
Additional Cleaning and PPE	199,002
Administration	334,026
Expenditure Subtotal	\$ 11,973,296

Recoveries	Amount
2021 Program Levy Operating Surplus	(409,272)
Anishnawbe Mushkiki	(55,000)
Reaching Home	(24,319)
Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative	(272,864)
Total	\$ 11,211,841
<i>* Note, Capital amount includes \$1,704,550 committed but not paid, pending project completion.</i>	

The impact of the SSRF funding from April 2020 through December 2022 has allowed for greater investment into programs and services that directly support vulnerable individuals as well as much needed capital investment allowing for the creation of new transitional housing. With the final phase of the SSRF program ending on December 31, 2022, Administration has been planning to continue to address the needs of homelessness and marginally housed individuals throughout the District of Thunder Bay using the Homelessness Prevention Program funding provided through the province of Ontario.

STRATEGIC PLAN IMPACT

Although the SSRF program was not identified in the Strategic Plan, it did meet the strategic directions of Investment, Partnerships and Advocacy. The investments have provided supports and protections to the citizens within the District of Thunder Bay in addressing the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. There are also long-term positive impacts realized through the investments in capital projects, resulting in additional transitional housing and emergency shelter capacity.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The SSRF was 100% provincially funded, although recoveries from other sources were realized during SSRF Phase 2 and Phase 4 to support specific projects.

TBDSSAB did commit a total of \$409,272 from the 2021 Program Levy Operating Surplus to support the Phase 4 capital development with Dilico Anishinabek Family Care for the creation of 20 new transitional support beds.



TBDSSAB was eligible to use up to 3% of each approved funding allocation for administrative costs related to the delivery of the program.

CONCLUSION

It is concluded that this report provides the Board with a final update on the Social Services Relief Fund program, funded through the province of Ontario, from April 2020 through December 2022.

REFERENCE MATERIALS

None

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