



BOARD REPORT

REPORT No.: 2023-29

MEETING DATE: JUNE 15, 2023

SUBJECT: AMO 2023 POSITION PAPERS FOR THE ASSOCIATION OF MUNICIPALITIES OF ONTARIO 2023 CONFERENCE

RECOMMENDATION

THAT with respect to Report No. 2023-29 (Chief Administrative Officer Division), we The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board (the Board) receive the Association of Municipalities Ontario (AMO) 2023 Position Papers as presented;

AND THAT we direct the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) to incorporate any edits to the position papers recommended by the Board by consensus into a final delegation package;

AND THAT we direct the CAO to send the final delegation package to the appropriate provincial Ministries;

AND THAT a copy of the approved delegation briefings package be sent to Thunder Bay District municipal councils;

AND THAT the CAO attend the 2023 AMO 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 Board with the position papers for the 2023 Association of Municipalities Ontario (AMO) Annual Conference for review and approval.

BACKGROUND

AMO will be holding its 2023 Annual Conference on August 20-23, 2023 in London, ON. As part of the conference programming, organizations may submit requests to meet with a Minister or Parliamentary Assistant.

COMMENTS

Position papers have been drafted by the Integrated Social Services Division team in consultation with the Office of the Chief Administrative Officer on two issues that are recommended to the Board for advocacy with provincial representatives.

The proposed advocacy topics include:

- 1) Homelessness Prevention Program, Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative and Canada-Ontario Community Housing Initiative Investment Plans
- 2) Social Assistance Rates

STRATEGIC PLAN IMPACT

This report aligns with the following Strategic Direction: Advocacy.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS



There are no immediate financial implications related to this report.

CONCLUSION

It is concluded that the AMO 2023 position papers be reviewed and approved as presented.

REFERENCE MATERIALS

- Attachment #1 [Position Paper: HPP, OPHI and COCHI Investment Plans](#)
- #2 [Position Paper: Social Assistance Rates](#)

PREPARED BY:	Carole Lem, Communications & Engagement Officer Aaron Park, Supervisor, Research and Social Policy
SIGNATURE	
APPROVED BY	William (Bill) Bradica, Chief Administrative Officer
SIGNATURE	
SUBMITTED BY:	William (Bill) Bradica, Chief Administrative Officer



THE DISTRICT OF THUNDER BAY
SOCIAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION BOARD

Advocacy to Align Housing and Homelessness Funding Timeframes

POSITION PAPER

August 2023
AMO Annual 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) urges the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) to align Homelessness Prevention Program (HPP), the Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative (OPHI) and the Canada-Ontario Community Housing Initiative (COCHI) Investment Plans with the funding allocation timeframes.

Summary

TBDSSAB requests that the MMAH aligns HPP, OPHI and COCHI Investment Plans with the funding allocation time frames to reduce red tape, provide stability and certainty to service providers, reduce approval times to support retention of staff and longer-term planning for capital projects.

Background

The TBDSSAB acknowledges and is grateful for the substantial increase in its HPP allocation received from MMAH. These enhanced resources, coupled with the ability to use HPP for capital, will assist in ensuring that many homeless individuals have a pathway towards housing and those at risk of homelessness remain housed. TBDSSAB also acknowledges the important ongoing support from MMAH provided under OPHI and COCHI.

In order to meet the goals established through HPP, OPHI and COCHI the TBDSSAB partners with third-party service providers who provide support and services to those experiencing homelessness. Presently, with annual Investment Plans, the TBDSSAB is only able to commit annual funding to these organizations. As a result, it can often be

difficult to attract and retain quality staff as the positions they offer are on a contract basis due to the short-term funding commitments. In addition, the ability to select capital projects for the entire term

If Investment Plans were aligned with the funding allocation time frame, rather than requiring an annual plan to be prepared and approved, this would assist third party operators with staffing issues and provide the TBDSSAB with the tools to manage the system more appropriately including planning for capital projects given the longer-term approval of our Investment Plan by the MMAH.

It is understood that the notional allocations provided are subject to passing of the Ontario Budget each year, and that, should there be a change to an allocation as a result of a future Budget, an amendment to the plan would be required. There would also be language included in funding and contribution agreements with third-party recipients identifying that future year funding amounts are subject to the annual budget approval.

Therefore, TBDSSAB requests that MMAH aligns HPP, the OPHI and the COCHI Investment Plans with the 3-year funding allocations.



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

Advocacy to Increase Social Assistance Rates

POSITION PAPER

**August 2023
AMO Annual Conference**

Prepared by:
The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board

Prepared for:
Hon. Michael Parsa, 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

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

Background

Rents in Thunder Bay increased 3.1% between 2020 and 2021 and by another 7.5% from 2021 and 2022.¹ 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. For example, a single, 40-year-old male on Ontario Works will experience a shortfall of approximately \$-195.00 after paying the average rent on a bachelor apartment and the cost of a nutritious food basket (\$314.98) in Thunder Bay.²

¹ Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. Housing Market Information Portal. 2023. <https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/hmiportal>

² Thunder Bay District Health Unit. "The Cost of Eating Well in the District of Thunder Bay 2022." [2023 - Nutritious Food Basket - The Cost of Healthy Eating in Thunder Bay District Final Draft 7 \(Jan\).pdf \(tbdhu.com\)](#)

Figure A: Shelter Allowances Compared to Average Rent in Thunder Bay³

Benefit Unit Size	Apartment Size	Average Rent (Thunder Bay)	OW Shelter Rate	Average Shelter Allowance Shortfall
1	Bachelor	\$757.00	\$390.00	-\$367.00
2	1 Bedroom	\$964.00	\$642.00	-\$322.00
3	2 Bedroom	\$1,175.00	\$697.00	-\$478.00
4	3+ Bedroom	\$1,457.00	\$756.00	-\$701.00
5	3+ Bedroom	\$1,457.00	\$815.00	-\$660.00
6+	3+ Bedroom	\$1,457.00	\$844.00	-\$631.00

This situation worsened throughout 2022 and 2023 where inflation has driven up the cost of necessary household items. The annual rate of inflation in 2022 was a staggering 6.8% and while it has been trending down, the latest reports for March 2023 still show it high at 4.8%.⁴

³ Note: for benefit units above 4 members, the average rent for 3+ bedrooms used as per available data from CMHC. The average rent for units above 3 bedrooms will be higher, resulting in an increased deficit. October 2022 rents, current 2023 OW shelter rates.

⁴ Historical Inflation Rates for Canada. [Canada Historical Inflation Rates - 1989 to 2023 | Inflation Rate and Consumer Price Index \(rateinflation.com\)](https://rateinflation.com)

It is widely acknowledged that the cost of food and other essential household items have outpaced the highest inflation experienced in decades. In fact, prices for food rose 9.8% in 2022, the fastest pace since 1981, after increasing 2.2% in 2021. Food inflation was broad-based in 2022, with prices increasing on an annual average basis in every food category except for canned salmon (-1.4%).⁵

When households receiving Ontario Works cannot afford market rental units the only option is homelessness. The number of emergency shelter beds used annually in Thunder Bay has increased an average of 2% year over year since 2015. The cost for an individual to stay in an emergency shelter in Thunder Bay for one month is \$1,089.⁶

By bringing shelter rates up to the average market rent of a bachelor apartment in Thunder Bay for individuals in receipt of social assistance, the province would reduce homelessness and could potentially realize a monthly cost savings of \$766 per recipient that is currently utilizing emergency shelter services.⁷

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.

⁵ Consumer Price Index: Annual Review, 2022. [The Daily — Consumer Price Index: Annual review, 2022 \(statcan.gc.ca\)](https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/2462001/2022001/article/00001-eng.htm)

⁶ TBDSSAB Shelter Data and CHPI shelter allocations

⁷ Based on TBDSSAB calculations of CHPI shelter allocations and OW rates