



BOARD REPORT

REPORT No.: 2023-49

MEETING DATE: DECEMBER 14, 2023

SUBJECT: 2024 RURAL ONTARIO MUNICIPAL ASSOCIATION POSITION PAPERS

RECOMMENDATION

THAT with respect to Report No. 2023-49 (Chief Administrative Officer Division), we The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board (the Board) receive the 2024 Rural Ontario Municipal Association (ROMA) 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 for endorsement;

AND THAT the CAO attend the 2024 ROMA Annual 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 2024 ROMA Annual Conference for review and approval.

BACKGROUND

ROMA will be holding its 2024 Annual Conference on January 21-23, 2024 in Toronto. As part of the conference programming, organizations may submit requests to meet with a Minister.

COMMENTS

Position papers have been drafted on four issues that are recommended to the Board for advocacy with provincial representatives.

The proposed advocacy topics include:

- 1) Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services: Increases to Social Assistance
- 2) Ministry of Education: Registered Early Childhood Educator Wages
- 3) Ministry of Education: Child Care and Early Years Programs Funding Guidelines Planning Time
- 4) Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing: COCHI Funding Formula
- 5) Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing: OPHI Allocation

STRATEGIC PLAN IMPACT

This Report aligns with the strategic plan's Advocacy-related objectives.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS



There are no immediate financial implications related to this report.

CONCLUSION

It is concluded that the 2024 ROMA position papers are presented for review and approval.

REFERENCE MATERIALS

Attachment #1	2024 ROMA MCCSS Social Assistance Shelter Rates
#2	2024 ROMA MOE RECE Workforce
#3	2024 ROMA MOE CCEY Funding Guidelines Planning Time
#4	2024 ROMA MMAH COCHI Funding Formula
#5	2024 ROMA OPHI Funding

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SIGNATURE	
SUBMITTED BY:	William (Bill) Bradica, Chief Administrative Officer



THE DISTRICT OF THUNDER BAY
SOCIAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION BOARD

Social Assistance Shelter Rates

POSITION PAPER

January 2024

Rural Ontario Municipalities Association (ROMA) 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 Minister to work with the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing to amend the Housing Services Act 2011 to increase rent scales for tenants in receipt of social assistance to the maximum shelter rate, or, at minimum, to account for inflation since the 2001 devolution of social housing cost responsibility.

Summary

Social assistance shelter rates are well below average market rent in Ontario, which creates a large shortfall in rent revenue for service managers. As community housing is administered by 47 service managers with funding from municipalities, the shortfalls result in higher costs for the service manager and ultimately a considerable impact on the municipal taxpayer. The social assistance shelter rates remaining so low act as a deterrent for further investment in new community housing units.

Background

Since 2000, rents have increased by 81.2% in Thunder Bay,¹ creating a widening gap between social assistance shelter rates and the actual cost of shelter. Under the *Housing Services Act, 2011* (HSA), rent-gear-to-income (RGI) for Ontario Works

¹ Thunder Bay. CMHC Housing Market Information Portal. <https://www03.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/hmip-pimh/#TableMapChart/2240/3/Thunder+Bay+CMA>

(OW) and Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) recipients is calculated according to a set social assistance rent scale, set out in Tables 1, 2 and 3 of O. Reg. 316/19. The rent scales were originally developed between the Ministry of Community and Social Services and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing and set at low levels because payment was between ministries and have not been adjusted since 2000. As community housing has been funded by municipalities since 2001, the impact of this funding gap is now placed squarely on the municipal taxpayer.

A single OW or ODSP benefit recipient who is housed through a private market rental unit is eligible for the maximum shelter allowance under either program. However, if the same individual is housed through a community housing provider, their shelter allowance is determined by the HSA rent scales, resulting in a monthly difference in provincial rent support of \$300 or greater in the District of Thunder Bay. This difference can be as much as \$750 per month or more if the benefit recipient is a family of four. The table below outlines the difference between social assistance shelter rates and the HSA rent scales:

Household Size	OW Shelter Rate	Average HSA Rent Scale	Difference	ODSP Shelter Rate ²	ODSP HSA Rent Scale	Difference
1	\$390.00	\$85.00	-\$305.00	\$556.00	\$109.00	-\$447.00
2	\$642.00	\$183.00	-\$459.00	\$875.00	\$199.00	-\$676.00
3	\$697.00	\$219.00	-\$478.00	\$947.00	\$236.00	-\$711.00
4	\$756.00	\$261.50	-\$494.50	\$1,027.00	\$278.00	-\$749.00
5	\$815.00	\$303.50	-\$511.50	\$1,109.00	\$321.00	-\$788.00
6	\$844.00	\$346.00	-\$498.00	\$1,149.00	\$363.00	-\$786.00
7	\$844.00	\$388.50	-\$455.50	\$1,149.00	\$405.00	-\$744.00
8	\$844.00	\$430.50	-\$413.50	\$1,149.00	\$488.00	-\$661.00
9	\$844.00	\$473.00	-\$371.00	\$1,149.00	\$490.00	-\$659.00
10	\$844.00	\$515.50	-\$328.50	\$1,149.00	\$532.00	-\$617.00
11	\$844.00	\$557.50	-\$286.50	\$1,149.00	\$575.00	-\$574.00
12+	\$844.00	\$600.00	-\$244.00	\$1,149.00	\$617.00	-\$532.00

² Ontario <https://www.ontario.ca/document/ontario-disability-support-program-policy-directives-income-support/62-shelter-calculation>

The difference in the rent scales and the shelter allowance maximums represents lost income for community housing providers. For TBDSSAB direct-owned units, this represents a shortfall over \$8.7 million this past year. These funds could be used to help to support the backlog in community housing repair, renovation, or regeneration. The image below demonstrates the magnitude of this lost opportunity for TBDSSAB³:

OW						ODSP					
Household Size	Number of Households	Monthly Rent Difference	Months	Lost Rent Revenue		Household Size	Number of Households	Monthly Rent Difference	Months	Lost Rent Revenue	
1	95	X \$305	X 12	=	\$347,700	1	665	X \$447	X 12	=	\$3,567,060
2	69	X \$459	X 12	=	\$490,212	2	124	X \$676	X 12	=	\$1,005,888
3	127	X \$478	X 12	=	\$728,472	3	102	X \$711	X 12	=	\$870,264
4	79	X \$495	X 12	=	\$468,786	4	71	X \$749	X 12	=	\$638,148
5	31	X \$512	X 12	=	\$190,278	5	21	X \$788	X 12	=	\$198,576
6	13	X \$498	X 12	=	\$77,688	6	10	X \$786	X 12	=	\$94,320
7	6	X \$456	X 12	=	\$32,796	7	3	X \$744	X 12	=	\$26,784
8	3	X \$414	X 12	=	\$14,886	8	2	X \$661	X 12	=	\$15,864
9	1	X \$371	X 12	=	\$4,452	9	0	X \$659	X 12	=	\$0
10	0	X \$329	X 12	=	\$0	10	0	X \$617	X 12	=	\$0
11	0	X \$287	X 12	=	\$0	11	0	X \$574	X 12	=	\$0
12 and up	0	X \$244	X 12	=	\$0	12 and up	0	X \$532	X 12	=	\$0
Average Difference		\$404	TOTAL = \$2,355,270			Average Difference		\$662	TOTAL = \$6,416,904		
Total Annual Lost Rent Revenue						\$8,772,174					

Ideally, community housing rent scales for social assistance recipients should be increased to the maximum shelter allowance. In recognition of current difficult fiscal circumstances, however, increasing the community housing rent scales to account for rent inflation for the 23 years since the last adjustment would provide some relief to municipalities while remaining economically responsible. The table below outlines the average HSA rent scales, used in the previous calculations, indexed to the inflation of rent since 2000:

³ HSC Funding of Income Assistance Programs in Social Housing Municipal Financial Impact Calculator

Household Size	Average HSA Rent Scale Current	Adjusted for Rent Inflation to 2023 ⁴	Difference
1	\$85.00	\$154.02	+ \$69.02
2	\$183.00	\$331.60	+ \$148.60
3	\$219.00	\$396.83	+ \$177.83
4	\$261.50	\$473.84	+ \$212.34
5	\$303.50	\$549.94	+ \$246.44
6	\$346.00	\$626.95	+ \$280.95
7	\$388.50	\$703.96	+ \$315.46
8	\$430.50	\$780.07	+ \$349.57
9	\$473.00	\$857.08	+ \$384.08
10	\$515.50	\$934.09	+ \$418.59
11	\$557.50	\$1,010.19	+ \$452.69
12+	\$600.00	\$1,087.20	+ \$487.20

It is recommended that, at minimum, the Ontario government immediately increase the community housing shelter scales under these programs by the inflation of rent from 2000 to current (81.2% in the District of Thunder Bay), and to maintain increases indexed to market rent fluctuations moving forward. This small modification to the social assistance rent scales could result in an additional \$1.9 million in rent revenue annually, helping to relieve some of the burden on municipalities. .

As it stands, the current shelter allowance mechanism acts as a deterrent for service managers to invest in new community housing units since the rent scales are so low, resulting in higher costs for the service manager and ultimately the municipal taxpayer.

Therefore, TBDSSAB urges the Minister to work with the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing to amend the Housing Services Act 2011 to increase rent scales for tenants in receipt of social assistance to the maximum shelter rate, or, at minimum, to account for inflation in rent.

⁴ TBDSSAB calculations based on Thunder Bay CMHC Housing Market Information Portal. <https://www03.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/hmip-pimh/#TableMapChart/2240/3/Thunder+Bay+CMA>



THE DISTRICT OF THUNDER BAY
SOCIAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION BOARD

Registered Early Childhood Educator Workforce

POSITION PAPER

January 2024

Rural Ontario Municipalities Association (ROMA) Conference

Prepared by:

The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board

Prepared for:

Hon. Stephen Lecce, Minister of Education

Brief

The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board (TBDSSAB) requests that the Minister of Education create a long-term, enhanced workforce funding program and immediately increase the wage floor to \$30 an hour to attract and retain more people for the Early Childhood Education (ECE) workforce.

Summary

TBDSSAB appreciates the recently announced wage floor increase to \$23.86 per hour by 2026, however, maintains that more is needed to attract and retain a qualified workforce as the revised wage floor still does not align with other professions with the same educational and regulatory requirements in Ontario. Workforce funding incentives are assisting with increased enrollment but need increased ongoing funding in order to bolster skills development and sustain child care system expansion.

Background

As part of the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) agreement, the Ontario Government has committed to the addition of 86,000 new licensed child care spaces and \$10 per day child care fees. There has also been a commitment to increase the wage of Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECE) by \$1 per year, starting at a wage floor of \$18 per hour in 2022. This wage floor will rise \$1 per hour each year to a cap of \$25 by 2026. On November 16, the province committed to raising RECE wages to \$23.86 for 2024, with an additional dollar per year to \$25.86 per hour in 2026. TBDSSAB thanks Minister Lecce for this increase and appreciates the impacts it will have for RECEs currently in the field.

The largest impediment to meeting the expansion goals for licensed child care spaces is the lack of a qualified workforce. TBDSSAB estimates an additional 130 RECEs are needed to fill the current licensed capacity in the District of Thunder Bay. The announcement of the wage floor beginning at \$18 per hour for 2022 further discouraged people from entering the RECE field and the low wages are detrimental to retention of this important workforce. According to preliminary findings from the Knowing Our Numbers Early Childhood Workforce study, only 37% of survey participants are sure they will stay in the field for the next 5 years.¹ Even with the increases into 2026, TBDSSAB maintains that the wage floors are too low for such an important profession.

In order to attract and retain qualified educators to the child care and early years system and promote the profession of RECE as an essential service, wages and funding must be immediately increased, as the current wage floor is lower than a living wage in many areas of Ontario, and not comparable to other regulated professions with similar educational requirements.

According to the Ontario Living Wage Network, “a living wage is the hourly wage a worker needs to earn to cover their basic expenses and participate in their community.”² The calculations use community specific data to determine the actual costs of living in the community. The living wage in Thunder Bay for 2023 is calculated at \$19.80 per hour. The 2023 RECE wage floor is \$0.80 per hour lower than the living wage, causing an annual difference of \$1,664 in income for 40 hours per week. In the Greater Toronto area, the living wage is \$25.05 per hour, leaving those RECEs at the wage floor earning \$14,269 less annually than a living wage.³ With the boost to \$23.86 in 2024, ECEs in Toronto will still be earning less than a living wage for their area.

Local schoolboards have a median ECE wage of \$25.78 per hour,⁴ while TBDSSAB CWELCC child care programs have a median wage of \$22.66 per hour.⁵

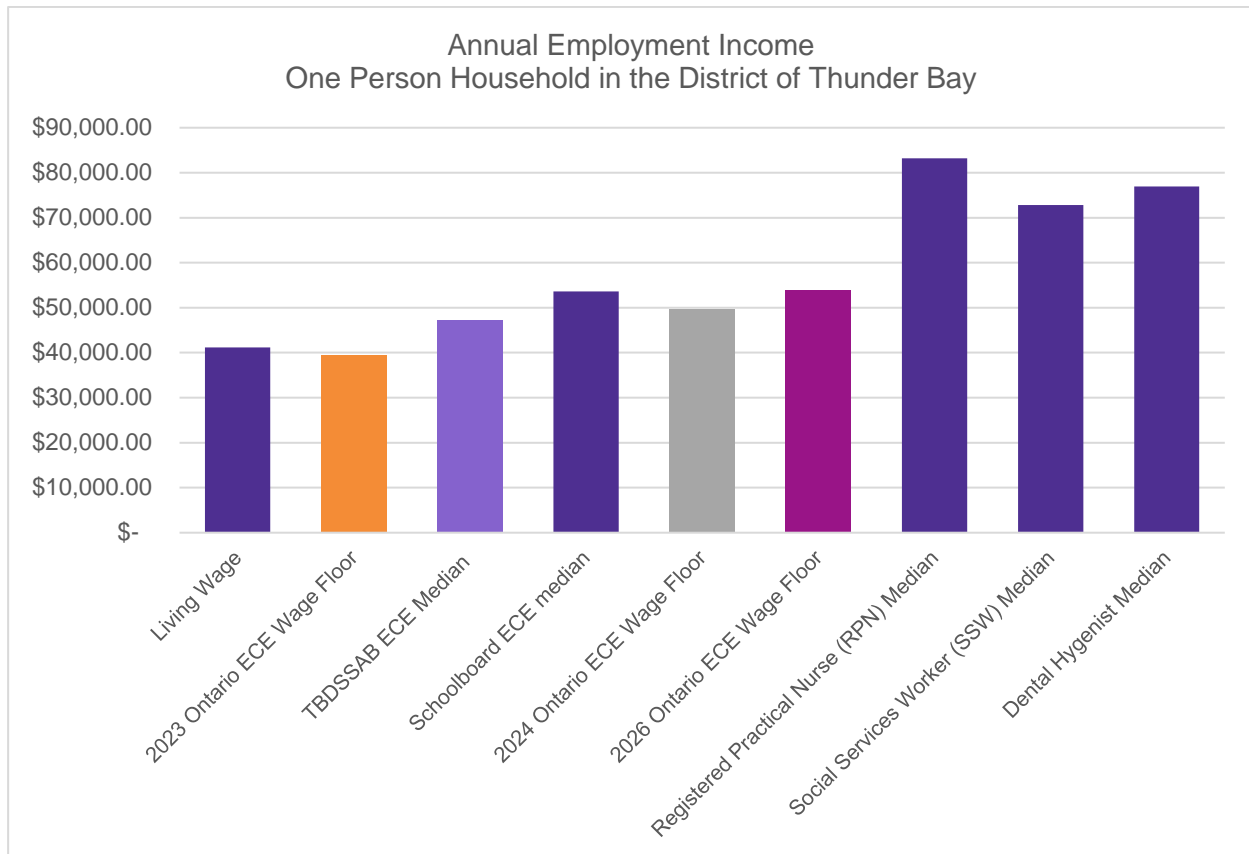
¹ Knowing Our Numbers. “Preliminary Findings: Workforce.” October 2023.

² Coleman, Anne. “Calculating Ontario’s Living Wages: November 2023.” Ontario Living Wage Network. November 2023. <https://www.ontariolivingwage.ca/rates>

³ Ibid.

⁴ From local collective agreements available on the Collective Agreements e-Library <https://www.lr.labour.gov.on.ca/en-CA/Collective-Agreements/>

⁵ Not-for-profit and for-profit child care centres; excludes municipal run centres.



Registered Practical Nurses (RPN), Dental Hygienists, and Social Service Workers (SSW) all have similar educational requirements and mandatory registration with a professional regulatory body as RECEs, and it is assumed wages would be comparable across these professions. RPNs have the highest median wage in the District of Thunder Bay, at \$40 per hour, while Dental Hygienists are at \$37 per hour, and SSWs at \$35 per hour.⁶ The lowest advertised job posting for an RPN was at \$30 per hour. A RECE earning the current wage floor will make \$43,680 less annually than an RPN making median wage, and \$22,880 less than an RPN making \$30 per hour. Even with the increase to \$23.86 in 2024, an RECE will make \$12,771 less than an RPN making \$30 per hour.

To align RECE wages with professions with similar responsibility, education, and regulatory body requirements, TBDSSAB recommends the Ministry of Education

⁶ Indeed job listings for each profession in Thunder Bay. November 2023.

increase the wage floor for RECEs to \$30 per hour. This will work to legitimize the profession and compensate for their status as an essential service.

In Ontario, it has been estimated that for every \$1 spent on early learning programs, the return is \$2.42.⁷ The impact on the economy was illustrated with the introduction of low-cost child care in Quebec led to a 7% increase in the employment rate of women with children in 2015. Not only did the program increase jobs in child care, but also in all other sectors. This increase in hours worked led to an extra \$2.8 billion injected into the economy.⁸

TBDSSAB has seen some success in supporting new students to enter the local ECE program at Confederation College by offering 102 bursaries and partnering to start a new Fast-Track Early Childhood Education Diploma program to offer free upgrading to people working in the field through the one-time 2022 Child Care and Early Years Workforce Funding. The Fast-Track program enrolled 12 people in the fall 2023 semester. Enrollment in the College ECE program has increased 27.7% in the 2023/2024 school year. More incentives focused on skills development for new and current RECEs are required to allow for continued growth of the early years workforce to accommodate more child care spaces. This work requires increased, consistent funding to support recruitment and retention for the RECE workforce, with advanced notice for Service Managers to facilitate planning and preparation of initiatives.

An immediate increase in wages coupled with long-term, enhanced funding for workforce retention and recruitment will help grow a sustainable and affordable child care system in Ontario.

Therefore, TBDSSAB requests that the Minister create a long-term, enhanced workforce funding program and immediately increase the wage floor to \$30 an hour to attract and retain more people for the Early Childhood Education (ECE) workforce.

⁷ Fairholm, R. Economic Impacts of Early Learning and Care. Early Education Economic Forum, Atkinson Centre, OISE/University of Toronto . June 22, 2011. Toronto, Ontario: The Centre for Spatial Economics.

http://mwmccain.ca/media/cms_page_media/2014/3/7/EarlyLearningEconomicForum_Fairholm.pdf

⁸ Gu, Wulong. "The value of unpaid childcare and paid employment by gender: What are the impacts of the low-fee universal childcare program?" Statistics Canada. July 27, 2022. <https://doi.org/10.25318/36280001202200700003-eng>



THE DISTRICT OF THUNDER BAY
SOCIAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION BOARD

Funding Guidelines Planning Time

POSITION PAPER

January 2024

Rural Ontario Municipalities Association (ROMA) Conference

Prepared by:

The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board

Prepared for:

Hon. Stephen Lecce, Minister of Education

Brief

The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board (TBDSSAB) urges the Ministry of Education to provide child care and early years funding guidelines and benchmarks early in 2024 for the September 2024 school year in order to facilitate planning.

Summary

To ensure smooth transitions for stakeholders with regards to program and funding changes, TBDSSAB recommends including service managers in the planning process and increasing communication regarding funding changes.

Background

In April 2023, TBDSSAB received the Canada-Wide Early Learning Child Care 2024 Child Care Funding Formula Discussion Paper from the Ministry of Education, outlining the proposed funding formulas for 2024 and requesting feedback. In late September 2023, TBDSSAB received a memo explaining there will not be a change in funding until at least September 2024. Currently, TBDSSAB has not received the benchmarks necessary to analyze the impacts of future funding changes on the local child care and early years system.

TBDSSAB understands the work required to produce funding formulas and guideline documents, however, it is important that service managers are provided information about future funding allotments with ample time to allow for planning and communication of program modifications to continue to provide quality child care and early years services. With this in mind, TBDSSAB urges the Ministry of Education to

provide updated guidelines, funding formulas, and benchmarks with more lead time in order to facilitate the planning and implementation of child care and early years programming.

Therefore, TBDSSAB urges the Ministry of Education to provide child care and early years funding guidelines and benchmarks early in 2024 for the September 2024 school year in order to facilitate planning.



THE DISTRICT OF THUNDER BAY
SOCIAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION BOARD

Canada-Ontario Community Housing Initiative (COCHI) Funding

POSITION PAPER

January 2024

Rural Ontario Municipalities Association (ROMA) Conference

Prepared by:

The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board

Prepared for:

Hon. Paul Calandra, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing

Brief

The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board (TBDSSAB) requests that the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) change the Canada-Ontario Community Housing Initiative (COCHI) funding allocation formula to continue to offset the ongoing annual funding decline received by Service Managers from the Canada - Ontario Social Housing Agreement.

Summary

The COCHI funding allocation should remain consistent with the expiry of mortgages to ensure that Service Managers have the appropriate resources to maintain Community Housing stock.

Background

TBDSSAB acknowledges and appreciates the recent one-time investment under COCHI to fund a new 14 unit build in the City of Thunder Bay. However, the sudden and unexpected decline in annual COCHI funding has raised concerns.

On April 30, 2018, Ontario and the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation signed a Bilateral Agreement regarding the National Housing Strategy. This Agreement provides an opportunity to align federal funds with Ontario's Community Housing Renewal Strategy priorities.

There are two National Housing Strategy funding streams that are transferred to Ontario Service Managers:

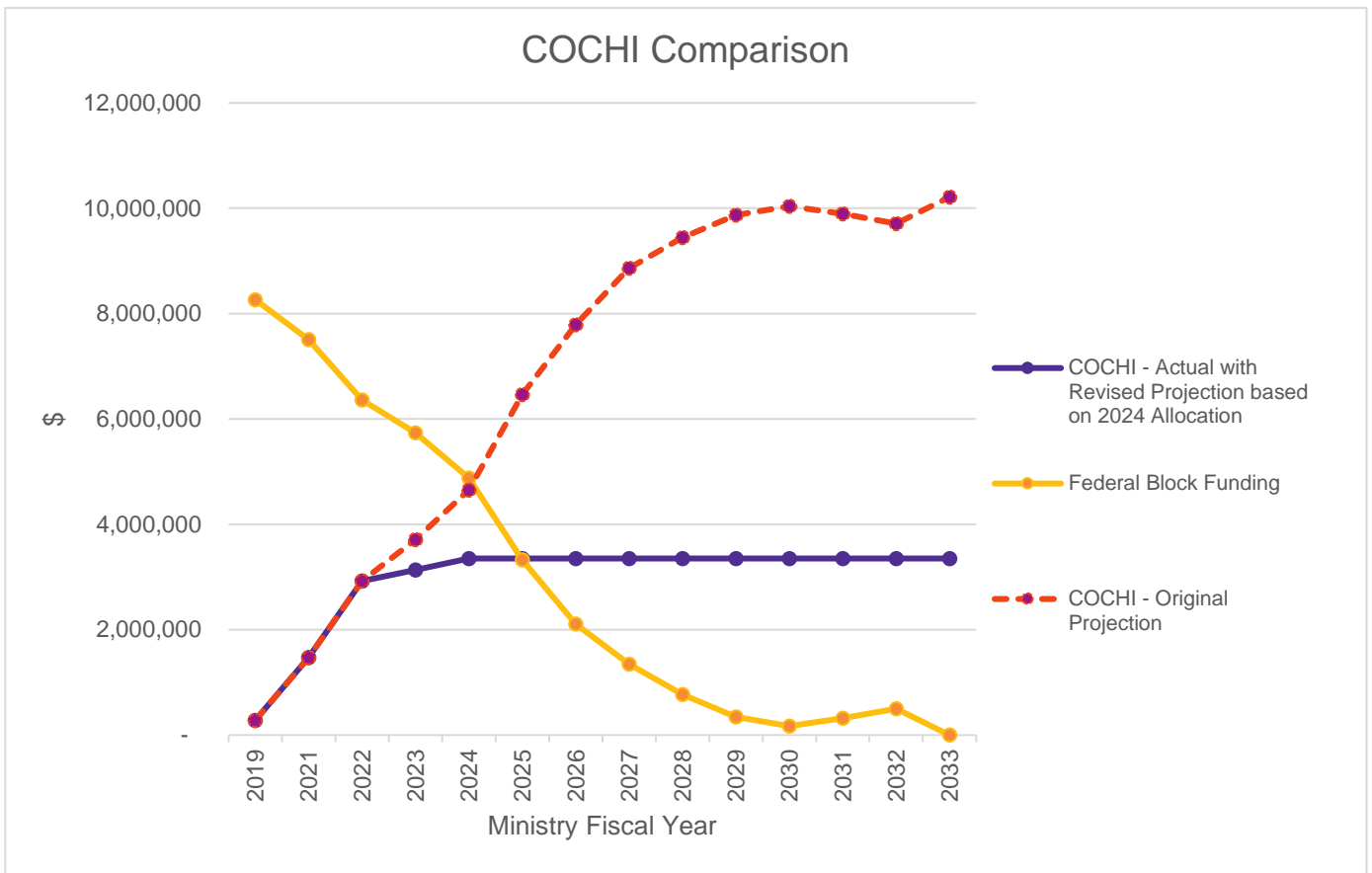
- Canada-Ontario Community Housing Initiative (COCHI) - to protect affordability for households in social housing, to support the repair and renewal of existing social housing supply, and to expand the supply of community housing over time.

- Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative (OPHI) - to address local housing priorities, including affordability, repair and new construction.

COCHI funding represents a re-investment of federal funding that has been declining under the Canada-Ontario Social Housing Agreement. It provides an opportunity for Service Managers and housing providers to address the challenges associated with projects reaching the end of their operating agreements and/or mortgage maturity.

The annual amount of COCHI funding for Service Managers was primarily determined by the amount required to offset the ongoing annual funding decline from the Canada - Ontario Social Housing Agreement.

However, in 2023/24 the funding formula was altered and TBDSSAB received approximately \$577,000 less than the amount required to offset the funding decline from the Canada-Ontario Social Housing Agreement as demonstrated in the chart below. That shortfall for 2024/25 is \$1,301,000 and this annual gap is expected to widen every year. This funding reduction put additional strain on the TBDSSAB levy to member municipalities.



MMAH has not provided a rationale or any details regarding the new funding formula to Service Managers related to COCHI. Sudden and unexpected changes to funding creates an unstable environment for planning and budgeting purposes.

As a result of the new COCHI allocation formula, TBDSSAB will have less resources available to maintain the existing Community Housing stock in the District of Thunder Bay.

Therefore, TBDSSAB requests that the Minister changes the COCHI funding allocation formula so that Service Managers continue to receive an allocation that will offset the ongoing annual funding decline from the Canada - Ontario Social Housing Agreement.



THE DISTRICT OF THUNDER BAY
SOCIAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION BOARD

Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative (OPHI) Funding

POSITION PAPER

January 2024

Rural Ontario Municipalities Association (ROMA) Conference

Prepared by:

The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board

Prepared for:

Hon. Paul Calandra, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing

Brief

The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board (TBDSSAB) requests that the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) increase the Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative (OPHI) allocation to TBDSSAB to allow for the creation of new Community Housing stock to address the current shortfall of units in the District of Thunder Bay.

Summary

Recent OPHI allocations have been spent on Ontario Renovates projects to keep people housed as funding has been too low for new builds in the District of Thunder Bay. 34% of the Community Housing waitlist do not currently reside in a unit, and the rental vacancy rates in the area are very low. In order to provide affordable housing, more housing stock must be developed.

Background

TBDSSAB appreciates the significant increase in the Homeless Prevention Program funding allocation from Ontario. Much of that increase will be used to develop transitional housing that will take the pressure off the emergency shelter system and to house those living unsheltered. This will provide the time people need to heal in a caring environment to become ready to then live more independently.

TBDSSAB also recognizes the investments made through the Social Services Relief Fund, much of which was used by TBDSSAB to fund improvements to shelters and to develop new transitional housing units. The recent investment under the Canada

Ontario Community Housing Initiative to fund a new 14 unit build in Thunder Bay is also very welcome.

What is still required in the District of Thunder Bay, however, is more capital funding for new community housing and more funding for portable housing benefits.

TBDSSAB acknowledges that all orders of government, including the Government of Ontario have a role to play in ensuring that Community Housing stock is adequate to meet demand.

OPHI offers a number of program components to service managers to improve supply and access to affordable housing including Rental Housing, Homeownership, Ontario Renovates, Rental Assistance, and Housing Support Services.

In the 2023-2024 fiscal year, TBDSSAB received \$781,375 in OPHI capital funding and allocated it to Ontario Renovates. The amount TBDSSAB has been allotted has steadily decreased since the peak in 2018-2019.

Fiscal Year	Funding	Component Group Used	% Annual Change
2017-2018	\$ 1,059,360.00	Social Infrastructure Fund – Rental Housing	
2018-2019	\$ 1,999,781.00	Investment in Affordable Housing – Rental Housing	88.8%
2019-2020	\$ 750,000.00	Rental Housing	-62.5%
2020-2021	\$ 609,045.00	Ontario Renovates	-18.8%
2021-2022	\$ 1,373,630.00	Ontario Renovates	125.5%
2022-2023	\$ 864,405.00	Ontario Renovates	-37.1%
2023-2024	\$ 781,375.00	Ontario Renovates	-9.6%
2024-2025	\$ 753,920.00	Rental Housing	-3.5%

Currently, the planned use for the 2024-2025 Year 6 funding is for Rental Housing builds.

While Ontario Renovates can keep some people in core housing need housed, 438 people active on the TBDSSAB Community Housing waitlist at the end of October reported experiencing homelessness or living in a temporary situation at time of application. This amounts to 34% of the people on the waitlist that do not currently

rent or own a residence and cannot be assisted with housing allowances, portable benefits, or Ontario Renovates funds. The current general vacancy rate for the District of Thunder Bay is extremely low: 1.8% for the City of Thunder Bay based on CMHC's 2022 data.¹ All indications point to the rental vacancy rate dropping lower since that time.²

As there is a lack of permanent rental housing options available in the District of Thunder Bay, to provide affordable housing for the individuals on the Community Housing waitlist that do not currently reside in a unit, developing more housing stock is necessary, and TBDSSAB is committed to building more community housing.

Current estimates for new apartment building construction in the District of Thunder Bay are around \$500 to \$600 per square foot for modest singles units,³ depending on the municipality. This cost may increase in the municipalities outside of the City of Thunder Bay due to higher labour and building material costs. The 2024-2025 OPHI funding allotment would allow TBDSSAB to build only 3 one-bedroom units at this cost per square foot.⁴ In order to address the 438-unit shortfall in the District of Thunder Bay, the TBDSSAB would require approximately \$127,750,000. The TBDSSAB requests that the Province of Ontario, with the government of Canada, assists with 50% of this need over the next ten years by allocating \$6,387,500 per year through OPHI to the TBDSSAB.

Therefore, TBDSSAB requests that MMAH increase the TBDSSAB OPHI allocation to \$6,387,500 per year for ten years to allow for the creation of new Community Housing stock to address the current shortfall of units in the District of Thunder Bay.

¹ CMHC. Housing Market Information Portal. <https://www03.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/hmip-pimh/en/TableMapChart/Table?TableId=2.1.31.2&GeographyId=35&GeographyTypeId=2&DisplayAs=Table&GeographyName=Ontario#TableMapChart/2240/3/Thunder%20Bay>

² Rental Market Survey is distributed in October – 2023 data forthcoming.

³ From Homelessness Prevention Program Capital Project Submission – OAHSS project and Bertrand new build estimates

⁴ Takes into account the 75% pro-rated share OPHI Rental Housing component will fund