



## BOARD REPORT

REPORT No.: 2024-39

MEETING DATE: OCTOBER 17, 2024

SUBJECT: 2024/25 CANADA ONTARIO COMMUNITY HOUSING INITIATIVE  
FUNDING ALLOCATIONS

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### RECOMMENDATION

THAT with respect to Report No. 2024-39 (Integrated Social Services Division), we The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board (TBDSSAB or the Board), approve the use of the Canada Ontario Community Housing Initiative to support capital repair projects not to exceed \$716,000 for not-for-profit Community Housing providers, and \$1,454,000 for repairs to TBDSSAB owned Community Housing units;

AND THAT the Board, approve the use of \$1,015,000 of Canada Ontario Community Housing Initiative funding to support Rent Supplement agreements for the Urban Native Housing units.

### REPORT SUMMARY

To provide The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board (TBDSSAB or the Board) with an update related to the TBDSSAB 2024/25 Canada Ontario Community Housing Initiative (COCHI) funding allocation.

### BACKGROUND

COCHI represents a re-investment of federal funding allowing Service Managers to address the challenges associated with housing projects reaching the end of mortgages and/or operating agreements. The objective of COCHI is to protect tenants in projects with expiring operating agreements/mortgages and begin to stabilize and eventually grow the supply of community housing through regeneration and expansion, repairs, renovations, and operating support. Housing projects and providers are eligible for COCHI funding as long as they are community housing providers listed in the *Housing Services Act, 2011* as of April 1, 2019.

Through Report No. 2023-31, the Board approved TBDSSAB's COCHI OPHI Investment Plan for 2023-24 and 2024-25. The Investment Plan identified \$2,170,000 to be utilized towards repair within the Community Housing stock. With COCHI funding over the past several years, TBDSSAB has focused investment in the areas of repair of

existing community housing properties and in the provision of rent supports and transitional operating funding to maintain Urban Native Housing units where the mortgages and operating agreements have expired.

On March 25, 2024, TBDSSAB received a letter from the Hon. Paul Calandra, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing informing Service Managers that the Federal government will be withholding \$355 million in funding to Ontario that was used to provide COCHI funding to Service Managers.

As a result of this letter, the Board approved Administration's recommendation to continue with repair funding for identified not-for-profit Community Housing providers and rent supplements for Urban Native Housing through the TBDSSAB Community Housing Reserve Fund and the Levy Stabilization Reserve Fund through Report No.: 2024-17.

## **COMMENTS**

On June 17, 2024, the TBDSSAB Chair received notice from The Honourable Paul Calandra, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, confirming TBDSSAB's COCHI 2024/25 funding allocation as the federal and provincial governments had reached an agreement related to this funding.

The confirmation of the COCHI funding by Minister Calandra nullifies the need for the TBDSSAB to use resources from the Community Housing Reserve Fund and the Levy Stabilization Reserve Fund and allows for the recommendation to utilize the COCHI funds as previously approved in the Investment Plan.

## **STRATEGIC PLAN IMPACT**

This report supports the 2024-2027 Strategic Plan practical vision of providing safe, affordable, agency-supported housing that everyone deserves.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

TBDSSAB's 2024/25 COCHI funding allocation will support five not-for-profit Community Housing providers that will evenly split up to \$716,000 for repairs to their buildings, TBDSSAB will receive \$1,454,000 for repairs to owned Community Housing stock, and \$1,015,000 will be utilized to support Urban Native Housing through the creation of new rent supplement agreements.



COCHI is a 100% Federal/Provincial funded program.

## CONCLUSION

It is concluded that this report provides the Board with updated information related to the TBDSSAB 2024/25 Canada Ontario Community Housing Initiative (COCHI) funding allocation.

## REFERENCE MATERIALS

Attachment #1 [Letter from the Hon. Paul Calandra, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, dated June 17, 2024](#)

PREPARED BY:	Aaron Park, Manager, Housing and Homelessness Programs
SIGNATURE	
APPROVED BY	Ken Ranta, Director, Integrated Social Services
SIGNATURE	
SUBMITTED BY:	Ken Ranta, Chief Executive Officer

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234-2024-2838

June 17, 2024

Mr. Brian Hamilton  
Board Chair, Thunder Bay DSSAB  
231 May Street South  
Thunder Bay, ON P7E 1B5

Dear Brian Hamilton:

**Re: 2024-25 Confirmed Funding Allocations for National Housing Strategy (NHS) Programs**

Following the federal government's recent approval of Ontario's revised National Housing Strategy (NHS) Action Plan, I am pleased to confirm your 2024-25 NHS funding allocations.

I wanted to take a moment to acknowledge and thank you for your support in this regard. Your efforts in providing timely, project-related information were critical in achieving this outcome and reinforced our position with the federal government that collaboration is imperative to solving the housing crisis.

Your funding allocations for 2024-25 for the Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative (OPHI) and the Canada-Ontario Community Housing Initiative (COCHI) are attached to this letter as Appendix "A". The funding allocations for OPHI and COCHI remain unchanged from the planning allocations communicated to you in 2023-24. The Transfer Payment Agreements and Program Guidelines for the programs included in Appendix "A" are current and continue to apply.

Details on Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit (COHB) allocations to enroll new participants in the program for 2024-25 will be provided as soon as possible. At this time, allocations for new participants have not been confirmed.

For more information on these NHS programs, please see Appendix "B".

As you are aware, through its Action Plan, Ontario reconfirmed its commitment to achieving its existing NHS targets, including the target to expand the number of rent-assisted units by 19,660 by March 31, 2028.

Using data provided by service managers and partner ministries, we were able to confidently identify 8,644 units (44% of the target) by March 31, 2025. We continue to work with the federal government on counting additional units that have been created across the province so this number should increase and while this represents significant progress, but much remains to be done.

To ensure we achieve the final target by 2028 while avoiding the risk of a future disruption to programming and related financial impacts, Ontario's Action Plan also made commitments to a number of additional measures including: establishing annual provincial supply targets, directing NHS funding towards the achievement of these targets; and implementing robust data collection and reporting mechanisms to ensure we are capturing all units towards the target.

In the coming weeks and months, we will continue to work with the federal government as well as our service managers to validate existing eligible units that have not yet been counted towards the target. I would also encourage you to prioritize new supply projects and communicate any newly forecasted units through your forthcoming Investment Plans.

To ensure our planning accounts for updated progress while taking local priorities into consideration, we will also be coordinating sessions with service managers in the near future.

Finally, I also want to let you know that a new condition will be implemented for OPHI and COCHI. The Ontario Builds Signage requirements will need to be met for all OPHI and COCHI capital projects that were not completed before December 31, 2023. Further details on these requirements will be provided in the near future by ministry staff.

Again, we sincerely appreciate your efforts to assist vulnerable residents and to keep people safe. I look forward to continuing our work together.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paul Calandra', with a stylized flourish at the end.

The Honourable Paul Calandra  
Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing

c. William Bradica, Chief Executive Office, Chief Administrative Officer  
Ken Ranta, Director of Integrated Social Services  
Jessica Vail, Team Lead, Municipal Services Office (Northwest)

## Appendix "A"

### Funding Allocations – Thunder Bay DSSAB

<b>Program</b>	<b>2024-25 Fiscal Year Confirmed Allocation Amounts</b>
Canada-Ontario Community Housing Initiative (COCHI)	\$3,351,900
Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative (OPHI)	\$793,600

## **Appendix “B”– Program Descriptions**

### **Canada-Ontario Community Housing Initiative (COCHI)**

Launched in 2019 as part of Ontario's *Community Housing Renewal Strategy* and under the federal National Housing Strategy, COCHI is a joint federal-provincial program that provides flexible funding for social housing affordability support, the repair of existing social housing and to create new community housing supply.

COCHI provides an opportunity for Service Managers and housing providers to address the challenges associated with social housing projects reaching the end of their operating agreements and/or mortgage maturity.

### **Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative (OPHI)**

In addition to launching COCHI under the Community Housing Renewal Strategy, the Ministry also launched OPHI in fiscal 2019-20.

OPHI is a joint federal-provincial program under the federal National Housing Strategy that provides significant flexibility to address local priorities in the areas of housing supply and affordability, including new affordable rental construction, community housing repair, rental assistance, tenant supports and affordable homeownership.

### **Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit (COHB)**

Launched in April 2020, the COHB is a joint federal-provincial housing allowance program under the National Housing Strategy.

The purpose of the COHB is to increase the affordability of rental housing by providing an income-tested, portable housing benefit payment directly to eligible households in housing need that are on, or are eligible to be on, a social housing waiting list, and to households in housing need living in community housing.