

**Ministry of
Municipal Affairs
and Housing**

Office of the Minister

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September 26, 2024

Board Chair Brian Hamilton
Thunder Bay DSSAB
Board.chair@tbdssab.ca

Dear Board Chair Hamilton:

Re: 2024-25 Confirmed Funding Allocations for the Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit (COHB) Program

I am pleased to write to you today with important details regarding your 2024-25 confirmed funding allocation for the COHB Program. I am sharing this information with you in confidence until it is announced publicly. As part of the protocol for Ontario Transfer Payment Agreements, all funding announcements must be made in consultation with the province, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), and the Service Manager(s).

As you know, our government understands the importance of housing that is affordable, and accessible, and that meets the needs of Ontario's diverse communities and populations. Since April 2020, over 26,500 households have been approved under the COHB program.

Thanks to your hard work over the last few years, as of April 1, 2024, the province is administering COHB benefits to approximately 105 households in your Service Manager area.

The province will continue to advocate strongly for additional federal funding under the National Housing Strategy (NHS), including its fair share for initiatives where Ontario is underfunded based on Core Housing Need. To this end, the province has finalized the terms of a COHB enhancement agreement that will result in \$14.7 million in additional federal funding for 2024-25 under the program's gender-based violence stream. This dedicated funding would be matched by the province. As such, Service Managers are encouraged to continue prioritizing survivors of domestic violence and human trafficking for COHB supports.

We are pleased to provide **your specific COHB funding allocation for the 2024-25 fiscal year to onboard new households**. Your confirmed allocation and target number of households is attached to this letter as Appendix "A" and is subject to the conditions identified below.

COHB Take-Up Plan

This year, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) is requiring Service Managers to complete a COHB take-up plan for new COHB households. The take-up plan is a projection of households to be onboarded to COHB for 2024-25. **Simply click on the link below for the take-up plan reporting template: [2024-25 COHB Take-Up Plan](#)**

In order to take up their allocations and onboard new households, Service Managers are required to first submit the take-up plans to the satisfaction of the ministry. The take-up plans must be submitted to the ministry within one week upon receipt of this letter.

To improve COHB resource planning, Service Managers are required to inform MMAH of any changes to the projected number of new households from the take-up plan per the existing quarterly reporting process.

Changes to COHB Requirements for Special Priority Policy Households

As you know, Service Managers are currently required to ensure that households who are on their social housing waiting list are removed from the list if the household begins to receive a monthly benefit under COHB. Ontario is waiving this requirement for households who are included in the Special Priority Policy (SPP) category under the *Housing Services Act, 2011*. **This means that for SPP households only, Service Managers are no longer required to remove the household from the social housing waiting list even if they accept a COHB benefit.**

MMAH is **strongly encouraging** Service Managers to allow SPP applicants to remain on their social housing waiting lists while they receive COHB. This approach aligns with the intent of the SPP, which is to help ensure that housing isn't a barrier to leaving a situation of abuse or trafficking. The terms of the waiver are set out in Appendix B to this letter.

I am pleased that our government is able to support the important work that you do to improve housing outcomes in your community. I look forward to continuing our work together.

Sincerely,



The Honourable Paul Calandra
Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing

c. William Bradica, Chief Administrative Officer
Ken Ranta, Director, Integrated Social Services
Jessica Vail, Team Lead, Regional Housing Services
Municipal Services Office North (Thunder Bay)

Appendix “A”

Funding Allocation – Thunder Bay DSSAB

Program	2024-25 Allocation*	Target number of new households for 2024-25
Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit (COHB) Program	\$306,600	67

*The COHB planning allocation amount is used for planning purposes and reflects funding available to support new participants in the program up to June 30, 2025, including Service Manager’s administration payments and rent deposit (“first and last”) payments, where applicable. Please note that February 28, 2025, is the last day to process applications using the 2024-25 planning allocation.

Appendix “B”– Changes to COHB Requirements for Special Priority Policy Households

A significant number of SPP applicants decline COHB offers, which increases their risk of continuing to live in a dangerous situation as they wait for Rent-Geared-to-Income (RGI) assistance. The purpose of this waiver is to help remove barriers which may prevent survivors of abuse and trafficking from accepting COHB. MMAH is strongly encouraging Service Managers to allow SPP applicants to remain on their social housing waiting lists while they receive COHB. This approach aligns with the intent of the SPP, which is to help ensure that housing isn't a barrier to leaving a situation of abuse or trafficking.

Currently, under section 3.1(f) of Schedule C to the Ontario Transfer Payment Agreement (TPA) for the Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit (COHB) and under the COHB Program Guidelines, Service Managers are required to ensure that households who are on their social housing waiting list consent to being removed from and are removed from the list if the household is approved for and begins to receive a monthly benefit under COHB. Further, in order to be considered an “Eligible Household” for COHB, the household must agree to being removed from the Service Manager’s social housing waiting list if the household is approved for and begins receiving a COHB benefit.

Ontario hereby waives these requirements in relation to households who are included in the Special Priority household category under the *Housing Services Act, 2011*. For SPP households only, Service Managers are no longer required to remove the household from the social housing waiting list if they accept a COHB benefit. Service Managers may elect to treat SPP households as “Eligible Households” for COHB regardless of whether they have agreed to be removed from the social housing waiting list.