



## BOARD REPORT

REPORT No.: 2025-22  
MEETING DATE: JUNE 19, 2025  
SUBJECT: 2025 AMO POSITION PAPERS

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### RECOMMENDATION

THAT with respect to Report No. 2025-22 (Chief Executive Officer Division) we, The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board (the Board) receive the 2025 Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) Position Papers as presented;

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

AND THAT we direct the CEO 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 CEO attend the 2025 AMO 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 2025 AMO Annual Conference for review and approval.

### BACKGROUND

AMO will be holding its 2025 Annual Conference on August 17-20, 2025 in Ottawa. As part of the conference programming, organizations may submit requests to meet with a Minister.

## COMMENTS

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

The proposed advocacy topics include:

- 1) Child Care Workforce Development: RECE Wage Structure
- 2) COCHI and OPHI Investment in the District of Thunder Bay
- 3) Challenges faced by Community Housing Providers in LTB application processes
- 4) Keeping Our Community Safe: 2-year Community Policing Pilot Project
- 5) Funding for the development of Supportive Housing Stock

## STRATEGIC PLAN IMPACT

This Report aligns with the 2024-2027 strategic plan's Advocacy-related objectives.

## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS



There are no immediate financial implications related to this report.

## CONCLUSION

It is concluded that the 2025 AMO position papers are presented for review and approval.

## REFERENCE MATERIALS

Attachment #1	Position Paper – Child Care Workforce Development RECE Wage Structure
#2	Position Paper – COCHI & OPHI Investment in the District of Thunder Bay
#3	Position Paper – Community Housing Providers Challenges in LTB Application Processes
#4	Position Paper – 2-Year Community Policing Pilot Project
#5	Position Paper – Developing Supportive Housing Stock

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THE DISTRICT OF THUNDER BAY  
SOCIAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION BOARD

# Child Care Workforce Development: RECE Wage Structure

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## POSITION PAPER

**August 2025**

Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) Conference

Prepared by:

The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board

Prepared for:

Hon. Paul Calandra, Minister of Education

## Brief

The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board (TBDSSAB) requests that the Ministry of Education provides Service Managers with a provincial wage structure in the childcare sector that would encourage and sustain the recruitment, retention, and workforce development of Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECEs).

## Summary

Since 2022, the funding agreement between the Ontario and federal governments has resulted in significant childcare fee reductions and a corresponding increased demand for licensed childcare. However, this increase in demand has surpassed program staff capacity and in turn, available spaces in the District of Thunder Bay, resulting in a growing childcare waitlist that cannot be served. The need for more qualified ECEs is critical. We have observed that one factor contributing to the decreased workforce capacity lies in the lack of a competitive wage grid that adequately compensates workers based on their qualification and experience. Therefore, addressing this shortage requires a multi-pronged strategic approach that includes the creation of a provincial wage grid.

## Background

As of February 2025, TBDSSAB has a childcare waitlist totaling 4,365 children, with 2,801 (64%) of that number requiring immediate space. In comparison to February 2024, there is an increase of 29 per cent, where the waitlist numbers were recorded at 3,398. On the other hand, 66 children on the waitlist have been offered spaces in one of the licensed childcare sites in the district. Based on the current rate, it will take over 42 months for all currently waitlisted children seeking immediate care to be actively placed<sup>1</sup>. This sizeable and slow-moving waitlist is significantly impacted by the lack of RECEs required to meet the increasing demand precipitated by Canada Wide Early Learning Child Care (CWELCC) fee reductions for families. From data collected (monthly) on childcare staffing, as of February 2025, we

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<sup>1</sup> It is worth noting that this projection does not account for new waitlist additions.

documented 261 staff working with 54 CWELCC eligible childcare centres across the district. Of that number, 134 (51%) are RECEs<sup>2</sup>. The lack of RECEs in the district has resulted in the operators not meeting full licensed capacity offered by the Ministry. At the time of composing this paper, the Ministry allocated 3,007 licensed spaces across the district, from that number, 89% (2,687) of the allocation is being used by children, with 320 spaces underused due to staffing shortages.

Accessible, inclusive, and high-quality childcare is essential to our provincial economy and RECEs are at the forefront. Without a viable workforce, there is no childcare, which takes on a compounding effect now and in the future. Parents/caregivers are unable to return to the workforce without the access to quality licensed child care spaces. The current ECE workforce has seen a significant decline over the last few years, witnessing a 20% reduction during the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>3</sup> In a focus group held by the Knowing Our Numbers (KON) group, they found that, post-Pandemic, childcare programs continue to struggle with staff recruitment and retention due to low wages among other factors<sup>4</sup>. This issue is very significant in the Northwest region as operators have reported experiencing staff shortages after the COVID-19 pandemic<sup>5</sup>. As a result, these programs have had to operate at a reduced capacity, send some kids home, or suspend programs entirely as RECEs have moved on to other sectors that offer commensurate incomes.

To begin addressing the staffing shortfalls, in late 2023, the Ministry announced an increase to ECE wages that would enable the province to compete (wage-wise) with its provincial counterparts<sup>6</sup>. We thank the Ministry for this boost as it recognizes the importance of RECEs in providing high quality care to the children under their supervision. However, the recent wage increase fails to adequately compensate RECEs based on their skills, educational qualifications and experience<sup>7</sup>. Especially when one compares it with compensations

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<sup>2</sup> That equates to about ~3 RECEs per centre. While the number of RECEs that are employed in each of the centres vary (for instance, one centre could employ 5 RECEs while another could have one), we felt that showing an average spread would reflect the inadequacy being felt in the system and the effects on the increase in waitlist numbers.

<sup>3</sup> Ontario Ministry of Education. (2021). Child Care and Early Years Workforce Funding: Ministry of Education.

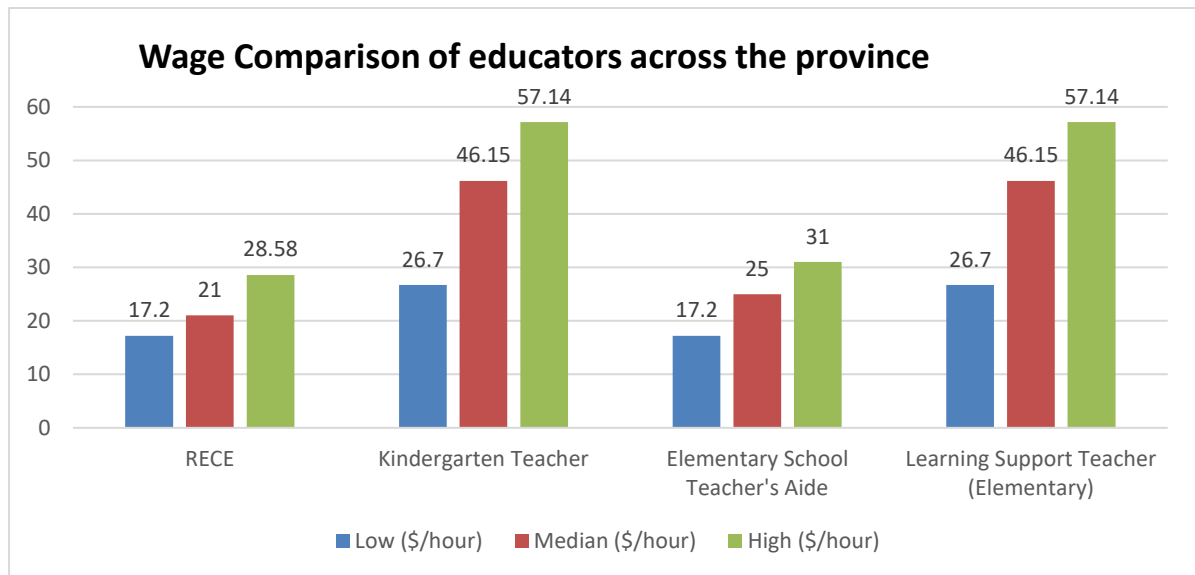
<sup>4</sup> KON (2024) surveyed RECEs about plans to leave sector within 5 years and found that in the Northern region, 38.5% plan to stay, 18.7% plan to leave, with a bulk of the respondents (42.8%) unsure of their future.

<sup>5</sup> According to the Knowing Our Numbers Northern Perspectives report, the study found that childcare operators face increasing difficulties retaining staff due to the "low wages, with many staff working two jobs or relying on their partner's income." Akbari, E., McCuaig, K., Schurter, M. Varmuza, P., Akbari, S., Mudie, S. (2024). Knowing Our Numbers: A Provincial Study with a Local Lens on the Early Childhood Education Workforce in Ontario. Northern Perspectives.

<sup>6</sup> CBC News (2023) "Ontario boosting ECE wages to \$23.86 an hour next year in bid to ease shortage of workers", obtained from [Ontario boosting ECE wages to \\$23.86 an hour next year in bid to ease shortage of workers | CBC News](#).

<sup>7</sup> Child Care Now (2024). Wages, benefits and pensions: Policy recommendations developed by the National Early Learning and Child Care Workforce Policy Table.

individuals receive in the broader educational sector (as shown in the chart below).



In addition, it does not account for the rise in the standards of living, and more recently the economic uncertainty that resulted in concerns over affordability.

As such, TBDSSAB asks that the Ministry goes a step further to encourage the growth of the ECE workforce now and in the future by introducing a wage grid in the province. By introducing a salary structure, we believe childcare operators would be afforded the flexibility to provide competitive wages that not only compensate workers based on their qualifications/experience but also attract and encourage individuals to work in the sector (please see Table in Appendix A depicting wages across comparable professions in Ontario).

Therefore, TBDSSAB requests that the Ministry of Education provide Service Managers with a wage grid framework that would help inform pay scales that adequately compensate ECEs and in turn, grows the recruitment, retention and workforce development of childcare staff around the province.

<sup>8</sup> Government of Canada. Prevailing Wages in Canada. Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECE) in Canada. Last updated Dec. 2024. Retrieved from [Registered Early Childhood Educator \(RECE\) in Canada | Wages - Job Bank](#).

## APPENDIX A

Median Hourly Wages for Licensed Practical Nurses and Paralegals by Region <sup>9</sup>		
Community/Area	Licensed Practical Nurses	Paralegals
Ontario	\$30.00	\$32.44
Northeast	\$28.00	\$27.67
Northwest	\$30.25	N/A
Ottawa	\$29.00	\$31.25
Toronto	\$30.00	\$35.26
Windsor-Sarnia	\$26.00	N/A
London	\$31.00	\$30.16
Hamilton-Niagara Peninsula	\$30.81	\$27.88
Stratford-Bruce Peninsula	\$30.10	\$32.44

<sup>9</sup> Table obtained from Knowing Our Numbers Executive Report. Akbari, E., McCuaig, K., Schurter, M. Varmuza, P., Akbari, S., Mudie, S. (2024). Knowing Our Numbers: A Provincial Study with a Local Lens on the Early Childhood Education Workforce in Ontario.



THE DISTRICT OF THUNDER BAY  
SOCIAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION BOARD

# COCHI and OPHI Investment in the District of Thunder Bay

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## POSITION PAPER

**August 2025**

Association of Municipalities Ontario (AMO) Conference

Prepared by:

The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board

Prepared for:

Hon. Rob Flack, 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) enhances future funding allocation for the Canada-Ontario Community Housing Initiative (COCHI), and Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative (OPHI) to allow Service Managers to effectively plan for investment in existing housing stock supplies, including post mortgage Urban Native Housing units, and invest in the creation of new affordable housing supply.

## Summary

COCHI and OPHI provide critical funding for TBDSSAB's effective planning for the provision of community housing, which includes capital projects, repairs and maintenance, housing supplements, and homelessness prevention in the district. Recent unexpected changes to COCHI's funding formula have resulted in severely limiting available resources that TBDSSAB would have used to effectively provide these services. Therefore, we are requesting that MMAH provides additional funding allocation in order to better plan for the stabilization of community housing stocks in the district of Thunder Bay.

## Background

Since the inception of the National Housing Strategy funding streams – COCHI and OPHI – these allocations have become critical to TBDSSAB's effective provision of community housing. In the past five years, COCHI funding has been central to capital repairs for over 2,600 housing units, along with supporting maintenance of over 241 existing legacy housing units built under the Urban Native Housing Program<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> The number of Urban Native units TBDSSAB has supported has increased over the last five years – in 2019/20, we supported 10. Fast forward to 2024/25, that number has increased to 118. We forecast a 37% increase (162) in the number of units for the fiscal 2025/26 with an estimated cost of \$1,400,000.

For example, COCHI funding for the fiscal year 2022/23 enabled TBDSSAB to finance repairs on 816 units for a total sum of \$1,435,770 (estimated at \$1,760 per unit)<sup>2</sup>. The need to repair more units, the following year, pushed the cost of repairs by 34%, with a total of \$1,966,400 for 1,019 units. In the fiscal year 24/25, there was a further increase of 10% at \$2,170,000; however, this increase was the total cost to repair 421 units, which was less than the number of units that underwent restoration in the last two years. In addition, more than \$750,000 was allocated from COCHI funding to support the ongoing inclusion of Urban Native Housing units post mortgage expiry. Without this investment, these units would no longer be included in rent supported community housing stock.

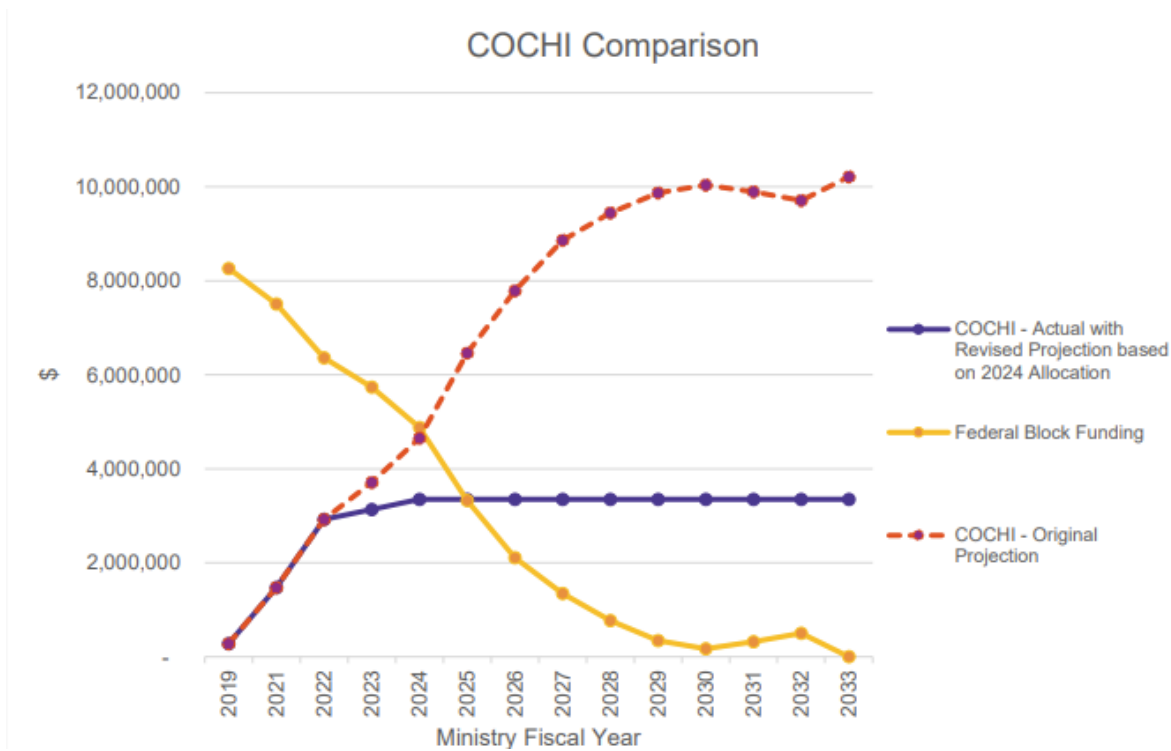
While the costs for repairs have gone up year-on-year, in 2023 the funding formula for COCHI changed and TBDSSAB received approximately \$1,000,000 less than the amount anticipated and was required to offset the funding decline from the Canada-Ontario Social Housing Agreement. As a result of the reduced COCHI allocations in 2023 and 2024, TBDSSAB had fewer resources available to effectively provide quality community housing for those living in the District of Thunder Bay<sup>3</sup>.

The following chart outlines the projection of COCHI funding that coincides with the reinvestment of allocations from expired mortgages, the Federal Block funding reduction and the actual and projected COCHI funding received.

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<sup>2</sup> While costs per unit vary depending on level of repair done in that unit this explanation provides an overview of an estimate of what it would cost if divided across the board.

<sup>3</sup> Our annual COCHI allocations are usually spread out between repairs, rent supplement (RS), transitional operating (TO), new build and administrative related costs. Given the reduction since 2023/24, our planning has limited us to spread the allotment towards repairs, RS, TO and administration, with TBDSSAB holding off on providing capital for new builds due to the decrease in subsequent years.



In fiscal year 2022-23, TBDSSAB received a funding allocation of \$4,573,670. This allotment enabled us to allocate \$1.6 million towards supporting a capital project for a new build of 14 units at Northern Linkage. The breakdown of cost puts the amount at \$118,000/unit. With the reduction in subsequent years, the allocation has been used towards repairs and maintenance of older housing stock.

Factoring the average annual rate of inflation to calculate costs to build the same number of units, TBDSSAB would request that the MMAH supplements future COCHI funding allocations by at least \$2,000,000<sup>4</sup>. This proposed increment would afford us more flexibility in providing funding for capital projects, while also being able to spread other amounts towards repairs.

In relation to the other funding stream – OPHI – TBDSSAB has also seen a reduction in funding year-on-year. This reduction has limited our ability to fully meet the mandates set out in the

<sup>4</sup> Data source: [Statistics Canada](#), Consumer Price Indexes for Canada, Monthly (V41690973 series).

‘COCHI & OPHI Program Guidelines’. A comparison of the funding allocated<sup>5</sup> between fiscal year 2021/22 and 2024/25 shows a reduction of 44% - from \$1,423,530 in 21/22 to \$793,600 in 24/25. The resulting effect of the reduction has meant that we have less flexibility in our budget planning as we must spread the costs between Ontario Renovates applications or rental housing<sup>6</sup>. With an average cost of a new multi-unit build exceeding \$400,000/unit, TBDSSAB is unable to invest in the creation of new affordable housing stock under the current OPHI allocation. That said, an increase in the OPHI funding allocation to equal the 2021/2022 investment of \$1,423,530 would enable TBDSSAB to build new housing units and assist the province in reaching its goal for housing development.

Therefore, TBDSSAB requests that the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) enhances future funding allocation for the Canada-Ontario Community Housing Initiative (COCHI) and Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative (OPHI) to allow Service Managers to effectively plan for the stabilization of housing stock supplies, including post mortgage expired Urban Native Housing units, and invest in the creation of new affordable housing supply.

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<sup>5</sup> Our annual OPHI allocations are usually spread out between the following costs: Rental Housing (RH), Homeownership, Ontario Renovates (OR), and Administration.

<sup>6</sup> For example, in fiscal 2021/22, the funding enabled us to provide financial support for the renovation of over 590 units – some privately owned and others managed by TBDSSAB. The reduction in funding in subsequent years meant that the number of units renovated reduced as well. In the following year, 22/23, the funding allowed us to support renovations of 552 units. While we were able to renovate more units in 23/24 (575), they were routine renovations on TBDSSAB-owned buildings. As such, we were flexible in spreading costs across. However, in 24/25, the funding has been used for a 2-unit project in Nipigon – Newton St.



THE DISTRICT OF THUNDER BAY  
SOCIAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION BOARD

# Addressing Challenges Faced by Community Housing Providers in LTB Application Processes

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## POSITION PAPER

**August 2025**

**Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) Conference**

Prepared by:

The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board

Prepared for:

Hon. Doug Downey, Attorney General of Ontario

Hon. Rob Flack, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing

## Brief

The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board (TBDSSAB) calls on the Attorney General of Ontario to work with the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) to address challenges related to long delays experienced in the Landlord and Tenant Board's (LTB) application process, which continues to have substantial impacts on our ability to follow our mandate of providing safe and affordable community housing.

## Summary

TBDSSAB owns and operates 2,473 community housing units and is responsible for the funding and administration of approximately 3,862 community housing units throughout the District of Thunder Bay. There are also approximately 609 housing units made available by private landlords under the Rent Supplement Program. We recognize that Community Housing is essential for the well-being of low-income individuals and families who access these homes across Ontario.

As such, TBDSSAB staff prioritize successful tenancies and eviction prevention by adhering to the parameters set out in our robust eviction prevention policy. However, these interventions are not always successful. While evictions are a last resort for us; unfortunately, situations arise where eviction is necessary for many reasons including preventing further damage to the property and protecting other tenants' safety. In these situations, we experience issues related to the timeliness of the Landlord and Tenant Board (LTB) process, namely the application screening process and engaging adjudicators during hearings. These delays result in not only increasing the continuation and effects of these high-risk situations, but also financial losses associated with lost rent revenue and the renovation of damaged units.

Therefore, we request that the Attorney General of Ontario and MMAH work together to offer more robust training programs for adjudicators that includes legal trainings on community housing matters, for example. These training programs would allow us to deal with matters more expediently and come to quality decisions when appropriate.

## Background

In January 2023, TBDSSAB provided LTB wait time details at the Rural Ontario Municipalities Association (ROMA) Conference to the Hon. Doug Downey, Attorney General of Ontario and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH). At that time, TBDSSAB had 64 hearings waiting for adjudication at the LTB. Attempting to address these issues, in May 2023, the LTB announced an increase in adjudicators from 53 to 128. We acknowledge the Attorney General's important action to increase the capacity of the LTB. However, these additional resources have only reduced hearing timeframes to an average of 4 months from date of application<sup>1</sup>. In addition, TBDSSAB has faced challenges related to the timeliness of the LTB process that has resulted in substantial impacts on our ability to follow our mandate of providing safe, affordable housing.

Currently, TBDSSAB has 63 applications waiting to be heard at the LTB level. These applications amount to approximately \$300,000<sup>2</sup> in expenses and lost revenue for TBDSSAB. In 2024, damages to the unit resulted in TBDSSAB proceeding with four insurance claims, with a deductible of \$50,000 per claim, two of these claims were a resultant effect of delays to hearings experienced at the LTB level. Based on our recent experience, factors contributing to these challenges include issues engaging adjudicators and the application process, from screening to scheduling a hearing.

The challenges we face in the application process are two-fold. Upon submission of the applications, we find that the screening process is limited. This often results in applicants waiting months for a hearing only to discover that the process can not progress unless the issue with their application is resolved. A recent example happened in August 2024 where we served two notices to a tenant. In October, we received a notice, with the hearing date set for March 2025. At the hearing, it was determined that there was an issue with the notice – a missing certificate – that resulted in the application being dismissed. It is worth noting that discretion could have been applied by allowing the missing document to be uploaded at the time, however, it was determined that the application process be restarted. Restarting the

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<sup>1</sup> Prior to 2020, the average wait for a hearing was 1.7 months.

<sup>2</sup> Of that amount, \$150,000 is linked to rent revenue and an additional \$145,000 related to restoring damaged units.

process has resulted in more administrative effort being made on resubmitting the application<sup>3</sup>.

In addition, there are inconsistencies with scheduling hearings<sup>4</sup>. Consequently, some hearings – for different matters – are scheduled on the same day, and in different hearing rooms. This results in time spent logging in and out of different rooms with the hope that we are logged into the right room at the time of our hearing.

Recommended solutions to this issue entail streamlining the booking system and looking into offering in-person hearings with consistent adjudicators assigned to geographic areas.

The second factor lies in the engagement process with adjudicators. As acknowledged in earlier paragraphs, there has been an increase in personnel since 2023. While this increase is welcome, we find that some of the adjudicators are not legally trained. Given the nature of funding for Community Housing, service managers manage the properties differently from private landlords. For instance, Community Housing Providers offer supports not often found when dealing with their private counterparts. As such, in situations where we engaged adjudicators with very limited legal background and training on community housing matters, it resulted in longer deliberation times. And once decisions are made, they are often inconsistent with the law<sup>5</sup>.

In addition to the financial implications, the delay also results in a degradation of our relationships with tenants and the community. For our tenants, the perceived lack of action results in a breakdown of relationship as they relate it to negligence on our part. For the community, it impacts the way community housing and its residences are viewed, which is often in a very negative light.

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<sup>3</sup> These issues – inconsistent practices and longer wait times - often culminate into more working hours for the administrative team, who file multiple applications in situations where just one application would suffice. Aside from the financial consequences mentioned earlier, we also absorb costly sums for the LTBs filings – in our 2025 budget, we allocated \$30,000 to cover filing and sheriffs' fees.

<sup>4</sup> While opportunities to choose an available time is limited to L1 applications, they are inconsistent and sporadic.

<sup>5</sup> The effect is that the longer wait time exacerbates delays to submitted applications. Responses to incorrect decisions include submitting review requests and/or new applications being filed.



## Recommendations

To address the root causes of these resultant outcomes, we recommend that improvements are made to the application process. Suggested improvements could include offering in-person hearings and appropriately triaging to provide spots for hearing matters that are fully prepared to be adjudicated.

On the issue of the lack of legal training and limited understanding of community housing matters for some personnel, we recommend substantial training focused on community housing – for instance, providing robust training on Section 83 considerations of the Residential Tenancies Act. One supplementary approach, assigning adjudicators through geographic regions<sup>6</sup>.

Having specially trained adjudicators assigned to focus solely on community housing hearings would pose near and long-term benefits. These benefits include a better understanding of the system that would result in better decisions being made at hearings. Another benefit would be that by grouping community housing hearings under selected adjudicators, it would streamline hearings and result in faster decisions being made.

We believe these suggestions would make the LTB more accessible and allow service managers to deal with matters more expediently and come to more quality agreements when appropriate.

A more long-term suggestion that TBDSSAB proposes is the exemption of Community Housing Providers from the LTB process. The rationale behind this proposal is that Community Housing is typically seen as ‘housing of last resort’. Because Community Housing is publicly funded, service managers are governed by the Housing Services Act (HSA) and held to expectations of higher standards of operation than private landlords. In addition, Community Housing Providers offer supports not often found with private rental agreements. These supports include eviction prevention policies, tenant support workers, and rental support programs to address arrears among other supports.

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<sup>6</sup> For instance, assigning adjudicators receiving cases situated in the Northwest Ontario. Given the unique nature of that region, having adjudicators who are trained on Northwestern issues would be better positioned to making sound decisions.

While we are aware that introducing this level of change would require a lengthy deliberation that would include a legislative change to the HSA, we request that this suggestion be taken under the Attorney General of Ontario and Minister's consideration of the recommended changes we have put forward.

Therefore, TBDSSAB requests that the Attorney General of Ontario work with the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, to address the negative impacts of the Landlord and Tenant Board's long hearing wait times by making improvements to the application process, providing adjudicators, without legal background, robust legal training on community housing matters and assigning consistent adjudicators by geographic areas. We believe that these recommendations would result in mitigating delays currently experienced with hearings at the LTB level.



THE DISTRICT OF THUNDER BAY  
SOCIAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION BOARD

# Keeping Our Community Housing Safe: 2-Year Community Policing Pilot Project

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## POSITION PAPER

**August 2025**

**Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) Conference**

Prepared by:

The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board

Prepared for:

Hon. Michael S. Kerzner, Solicitor General of Ontario

## Brief

The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board (TBDSSAB) requests that the Solicitor General of Ontario provides funding for our proposal of a two-year pilot project to address the safety of the residents living in Community Housing. This funding would assist with the creation of a team of Special Constables from the Thunder Bay Police Services (TBPS) that would support TBDSSAB direct-owned housing to increase neighborhood safety as well as peace of mind for residents and our community.

## Summary

In recent years, the tenant demographic served by TBDSSAB has changed significantly. Prior to the change, tenant demography constituted of low-income families and seniors. Recently, due to the high incidence of homelessness and a desire to house individuals, the resident mix of TBDSSAB's direct-owned housing units include individuals experiencing high risk behaviours, those who may be extremely vulnerable and some residents who are not capable of independent living. In addition to this change, the District of Thunder Bay has experienced a dramatic increase in crime. Often, there is an intersection between the perpetrators of criminal acts and tenants, which has resulted in an increase in deviant behavior around our directly owned properties. The combination of these issues has put pressure on TBDSSAB's ability to maintain a safe and secure environment for its tenants and staff who help manage the properties.

## Background

As part of its mandate as a housing service manager, The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board (TBDSSAB) operates properties throughout the district, with majority located within the city of Thunder Bay. In the past, a bulk of the tenant demographic residing in TBDSSAB's properties constituted low-income families and seniors. However, in recent years, the tenant demographic has widened to include individuals living with mental health and/or addiction issues and people who are incapable of living independently. These demographic changes have resulted in criminal elements taking advantage of some of the

vulnerable population living in these properties. Two news articles – published 10 years apart – attest to the increase in criminal activities and the effect on its residents<sup>1</sup>.

According to Stats Canada's 2021 Population Census, the district of Thunder Bay is home to a population of 146,862<sup>2</sup>. In March 2025, Fraser Institute released a report titled 'Comparing Recent Crime Trends in Canada and the United States'<sup>3</sup>. In the report, the author compared violent crime rates per capita in census metropolitan areas (CMAs) from 2019-2022. In his assessment, the author found that the City of Thunder Bay has the highest 'violent crime rate' in Ontario (at 546 per 100,000) and second in Canada<sup>4</sup>, as shown in the image below. It is worth noting, in the context of this paper, that many research studies have shown the correlation between the perpetrators of criminal activities and vulnerable population(s).

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<sup>1</sup> In a 2023 CBC news article, a TBDSSAB tenant – who has lived in the property for four year – said “she no longer brings her grandchildren to visit because she feels it’s so unsafe” ([Thunder Bay Housing residents living in fear | CBC News](#)). Another article, published in 2023, also highlighted continued tenancy concerns ([How drug trafficking and shootings in Thunder Bay's social housing impact people living there | CBC News](#)).

<sup>2</sup> Statistics Canada, 2021 Census of Population.

<sup>3</sup> This report used comparisons of compatible/comparable categories of different offences across Canada and the US. In its assessment, the author shows comparisons between 'Violent crime rates' and also 'Property Crime Rates'.

<sup>4</sup> The report shows that “for violent crimes, Winnipeg ranks first at 675 violent crimes per 100,000, followed by Thunder Bay, at 546 per 100,000” (Di Matteo 2025). Obtained from Fraser Institute, 'Comparing Recent Crime Trends in Canada and the United States'. <https://www.fraserinstitute.org/studies/ranking-crime-in-canada-and-the-united-states>.”

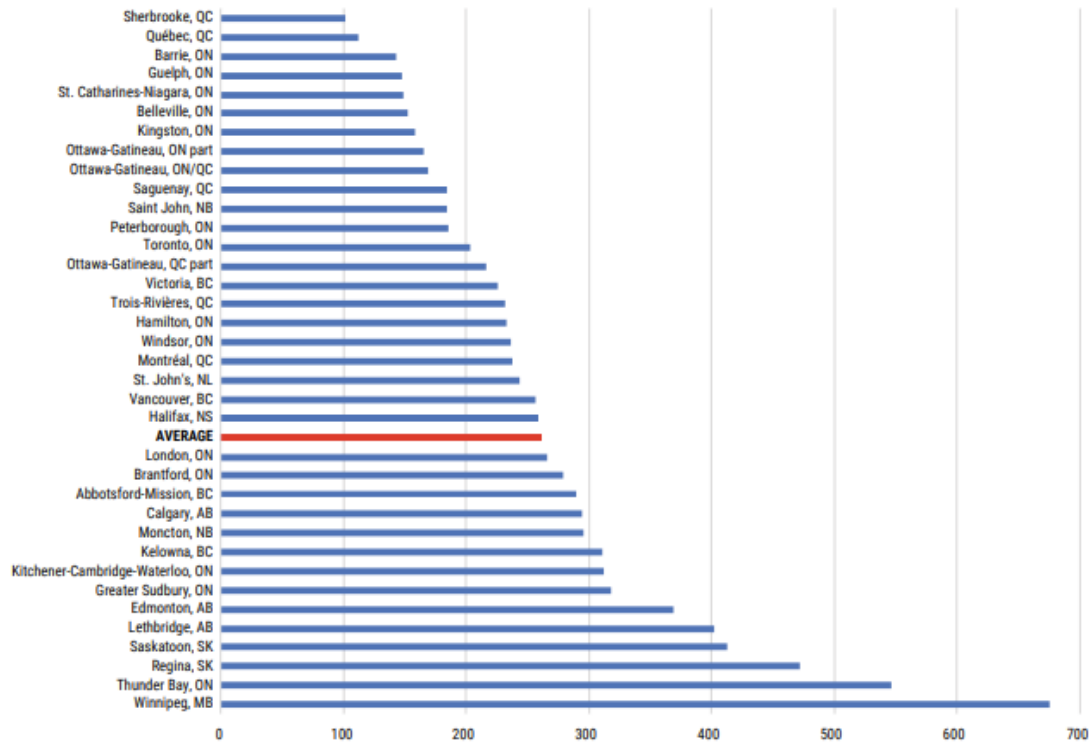


Figure 1 - Select Canadian CMAAs, Maximum Violent Crime Rate per 1000,000, 2019-2022 (Di Matteo:2025)

Based on the Auditor General of Ontario’s classification of groups considered as part of the vulnerable population, we consider that a contingent of TBSSAB’s tenants – i.e. experiencing mental health and/or addiction issues – fall under this grouping. As a result of the intersection mentioned in the previous paragraph, tenants have voiced concerns about not feeling safe in their homes and neighborhood. News articles are replete with stories from TBDSSAB tenants who are “scared to leave their homes...” with concerns about “drug trafficking taking place in the building, with non-residents regularly on the premises”<sup>5</sup>.

To address these concerns, TBDSSAB approached the security issue using a multi-pronged approach. TBDSSAB has invested heavily in video surveillance equipment, engaged in CPTED design improvements<sup>6</sup>, contracted extensive third-party security services and engaged on regular and ongoing tenant education. This also included leveraging our relationship with the Thunder Bay Police Service (TBPS). For instance, in 2017, There was an information sharing agreement signed between both parties to provide the TBPS access to TBDSSAB’s

<sup>5</sup> CBC News (2025). “McIvor Court residents hold rally over safety concerns”. Extracted from [McIvor Court residents hold rally over safety concerns | CBC News](#).

<sup>6</sup> CPTED stands for Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design. The premise of CPTED is that “the proper design and effective use of the built environment can lead to a reduction in the incidence and fear of crime, and an improvement in life” (CPTEDCanada.com)

surveillance recordings. In addition, the partnership also collaborated on joint efforts between TBDSSAB staff and the Community Oriented Response and Engagement unit (CORE) of TBPS in 2021. One of the joint outcomes of the CORE unit is to do home visits mitigating illegal actions<sup>7</sup> taking place within TBDSSAB direct-owned housing. Since its inception till date, there have been 681 joint visits<sup>8</sup>.

Another approach TBDSSAB took was performing a security audit on all directly owned buildings. The outcome of the audit was a report of the findings and recommendations. Among the findings was the impact of perception and how the public hold misconceptions about community housing, and when left unchecked, it exacerbates unfounded beliefs about the population who reside in these properties. Some recommendations include the use of mobile security patrols to discourage and prevent deviant behaviors from occurring.

While the operationalization of the CORE unit has yielded positive outcomes, criminal activities around our properties are still ongoing (news coverage of recent incident shown in [Appendix A](#) below). Further, TBPS has indicated an inability to fully address the needs at TBDSSAB properties due to a shortage of policing personnel. As such, we believe that creating a team of Special Constables assigned to patrolling our properties and enforcing bylaws and Acts would help address the issue.

The proposed model, similar to the program in Toronto<sup>9</sup>, is in the shape of creating a team of Special Constables that consists of one supervisor and three TBPS officers. Given the comprehensive training they have undergone as Police Officers, this team will be equipped with the appropriate skillsets to address concerns related to substance use and addiction. As such, we believe that the presence of Special Constables around the properties would help mitigate security-related incidents, discourage deviant behaviours from occurring and in turn, allow tenants to feel safe and possibly address the public's misconceptions of community housing.

In order to operationalize the use of a team of Special Constables would require an operational cost of \$500,000 per year. This proposed cost would enable a consistent presence of the team

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<sup>7</sup> These illegal actions include reducing home takeovers and to support at risk-tenants.

<sup>8</sup> In 2021, there were 206 visits; 130 visits in 2022; 129 in '23; and 216 in 2024.

<sup>9</sup> Toronto Community Housing collaborated with the Police Service to create the 'Community Safety Unit' of Special Constables. These Constables have the authority to enforce various laws in the City of Toronto if the offence is connected to a Toronto Community Housing or vehicle.

around our properties. In the long run, the assessment on the success and lessons learned of the pilot program would help inform its continuity.

Therefore, TBDSSAB requests that the Solicitor General of Ontario provides a funding of \$1,000,000 over 2 years to enable TBDSSAB to work with the Thunder Bay Police Service in order to run a two-year pilot that would involve a team of Special Constables, which would allow us to meet our mandate of providing a safe and secure environment for our tenants.



## Appendix A

### 1. CBC News (2023) Article

#### Thunder Bay

## How drug trafficking and shootings in Thunder Bay's social housing impact people living there

Recent shooting at Spence Court has put social housing safety in the spotlight



[Sarah Law](#) · CBC News · Posted: Jun 01, 2023 5:00 AM EDT | Last Updated: June 1, 2023

Image one - Obtained from <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/thunder-bay/thunderbay-safety-shootings-socialhousing-1.6860822>.

### 2. CBC News (Jan. 2025) article

#### Thunder Bay

## Homicide at social housing building in Thunder Bay, Ont., sparks calls for more security measures

Death at McIvor Court remains under investigation with no arrests made, police say



[Sarah Law](#) · CBC News · Posted: Jan 29, 2025 4:00 AM EST | Last Updated: January 29

Image two - Obtained from <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/thunder-bay/thunder-bay-social-housing-safety-concerns-1.7443946>.

3. Thunderbay Newswatch (Jan 2025) article

HOME > LOCAL NEWS

## 'Terrified': McIvor Court residents react to homicide

Police still holding the scene Thursday afternoon as investigation continues



Matt Prokopchuk  
Jan 16, 2025 5:15 PM



1 / 3 Thunder Bay police officers hold the scene of a homicide on January 16 2025. | Matt Prokopchuk

Image three - Obtained from <https://www.tbnewswatch.com/local-news/terrified-mcivor-court-residents-react-to-homicide-10088244>.

4. CBC News (Feb. 2025) article

Thunder Bay

## McIvor Court residents hold rally over safety concerns

Building was the scene of a homicide this year; residents say drug trafficking, other issues persist

CBC News · Posted: Feb 14, 2025 4:26 PM EST | Last Updated: February 14

Image four - <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/thunder-bay/mcivor-court-rally-1.7459791>.



THE DISTRICT OF THUNDER BAY  
SOCIAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION BOARD

# Developing More Supportive Housing stocks

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## POSITION PAPER

**August 2025**

**Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) Annual Conference**

Prepared by:

The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board

Prepared for:

Hon. Sylvia Jones, Minister of Health

Hon. Rob Flack, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing

Hon. Michael Parsa, Minister of Children, Community and Social Service

## Brief

The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board (TBDSSAB) requests that the Ministry of Health (MOH), Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH), and the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) provide funding for the development of additional supportive housing in the District of Thunder Bay to help individuals who require mental health and addictions supports, aging in place, and alternative level of care (ALC) gain access to units with the adequate level of supports. This would in turn free up bed space in community housing and healthcare facilities for other individuals that would benefit from the availability of care.

## Summary

TBDSSAB urges the MOH, MMAH, and MCCSS to continue the important work established by the virtual engagement process in 2020-21. The initiative focused on key areas within the Province's Supportive Housing system that included supply, access, efficiency and complex needs. The outcome of this process shed light on the importance of increasing the supply of and access to supportive housing stocks that would ensure successful tenancies and end ongoing cycles of homelessness. Through various funding streams, TBDSSAB has made significant investments in supportive housing. However, individuals that require an ALC in the District of Thunder Bay face disproportionately long wait times during the discharge process. For example, the average length of stay (year-to-date) for individuals whose discharge disposition to supportive housing is 198 days. For this reason, TBDSSAB requests that the MOH, MMAH, and MCCSS provide funding to develop a 50-bed supportive housing space.

## Background

Across the country, supportive housing solutions are required to ensure successful tenancies, prevent evictions, and end ongoing cycles of homelessness. For example, the Housing First approach to ending homelessness offers individualized and client-driven support to help sustain permanent housing. In 2016, implementation of this approach in a veteran-specific pilot

project resulted in an estimated annual saving of \$536,000 across four Canadian cities. Another example is evident in the province-led Home for Good (HFG) funding initiative whose purpose is to help Service Managers house homeless individuals and connect them with appropriate support to facilitate successful transitions into stable housing<sup>1</sup>.

In addition, through investments from the concluded Social Services Relief Fund (SSRF) TBDSSAB has worked with community partners to establish 31 supportive and transitional housing spaces that build upon existing investments. As of April 2024, the Homelessness Prevention Program (HPP) has also enabled TBDSSAB to provide funding for 52 new supportive housing units. These include:

- 22 long-term supportive housing units through St. Joseph's Care Group (SJCG) and Northern Linkage for individuals with mental health and addictions challenges,
- 9 new units through partnership with the Elizabeth Fry Society of Northwestern Ontario for those experiencing or at risk of homelessness,
- 17 new units through partnership with Shelter House and NorWest Community Health Centre for those experiencing or at risk of homelessness,
- 4 new units through Ontario Aboriginal Housing Services, for Indigenous individuals experiencing mental health and addictions challenges.

TBDSSAB would like to thank the provincial and federal government for these funding initiatives. Without the level of support we have received, these projects would not have come to fruition.

However, we believe more supportive solutions are required. The rationale is a lack of supply and access to supportive housing that results in long wait times experienced by patients who have a discharge disposition from SJCG to a different care facility or supportive housing unit. Upon discharge, individuals who require ALC are temporarily relocated to a 32-bed Transitional Care Unit (TCU) that is operated out of one of their Long-Term Care (LTC) facilities<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Since the inception of HFG, the TBDSSAB has housed over 436 unique individuals, with a 75% increase in the past two years. As of May 2024, 59 individuals are receiving a portable HFG subsidy, and 65 clients are provided with case management services through the HFG support staff from Dilico Anishinabek Family Care and SJCG.

<sup>2</sup> This makeshift TCU was created to prevent releasing individuals (who need extra support and/or homeless) to the street by offering them a short-term option while their request to access supportive housing is being processed.

SJCG reports that the year-to-date average length of stay (LOS) for patients who require ALC averages 167 days<sup>3</sup>. For the individuals who would benefit from receiving care in a supportive housing setting, the average LOS in the TCU is 198 days. In the last three years, the average LOS for 18 individuals who were admitted to the TCU with plans to move them to supportive housing was 183 days. While there is no maximum LOS in the TCU, the major reason for a longer than expected LOS is due to a lack of supportive housing options.

The effect of these longer than expected LOS is felt in hospital settings as congestion builds up due to TCU beds being occupied by individuals waiting for housing options to be accessible. The congestion also increases wait times for individuals who require care in hospital settings and in turn, cannot gain the right level of care until hospital beds are available to them. One key solution to addressing the extended LOS for individuals who require ALC – and the subsequent domino effects on the housing system—is the development of additional supportive housing units.

Therefore, TBDSSAB urges the MMAH, MOH, and MCCSS to provide funding for the creation of 50-unit supportive housing stock that would enable individuals who require Alternate Levels of Care to gain access to an increased housing supply and in turn reduce the length of stay in the Transitional Care Units that are offered as a short-term solution.

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<sup>3</sup> Discharge disposition for these individuals includes acute care, LTC, and supportive housing etc. Average length of stay for Individuals who require LTC level of care is 77 days.