



BOARD REPORT

REPORT No.: 2025-27

MEETING DATE: SEPTEMBER 18, 2025

SUBJECT: UPDATE TO THE COMMUNITY HOUSING LOCAL SERVICE STANDARDS

RECOMMENDATION

THAT with respect to Report No. 2025-27 (Integrated Social Services Division), we The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board approve the proposed changes to the Local Service Standards as presented.

REPORT SUMMARY

To provide The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board (TBDSSAB or the Board) with information on the proposed changes to the Local Service Standards, as authorized under *the Housing Services Act, 2011* (HSA).

BACKGROUND

Through the *Housing Services Act, 2011* and associated regulations, Service Managers are required to create the Local Housing Standards for Community Housing. The Local Housing Standards must be up to date and compliant with regulatory changes announced by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH). Additionally, Service Managers have the authority to create local rules relevant to the delivery of Community Housing.

COMMENTS

As a result of regulatory and program changes, Administration has created a more fulsome supportive housing continuum to better address housing and homelessness efforts across the district. Specific sections of the Local Service Standards have been updated as follows.

Section 3.1 – TBDSSAB Roles & Responsibilities

The current structure of the Co-ordinated Access System is designed to make the application process as accessible and user friendly as possible for applicants. The application is available electronically online and printable for paper copy submissions.

Assistance to apply is available by appointment or as a walk in with an Intake staff member.

The Supervisor, Integrated Social Services plays the most direct role in overseeing the administration of the Co-ordinated Access System and works in conjunction with the Housing Programs Officer to monitor compliance with the Act, its regulations and all local policies and procedures.

TBDSSAB is responsible for all tasks involved in the ongoing daily management of the Centralized Waiting List. Tasks performed by TBDSSAB include:

- Intake staff position designated to notifying households if their application for Rent Geared to Income (RGI) assisted housing is completed and/or where they are eligible for placement on the centralized waiting list.
- Designated staff call individuals to gather missing information if the applicant is available instead of sending out a denial letter.
- Providing information about subsidized housing available in the District of Thunder Bay.

TBDSSAB Roles & Responsibilities for Housing Applications While Incarcerated

- If the individual is on Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP), TBDSSAB will accept and process the application and will notify the individual if they are eligible.
- If the individual is not on ODSP and has no source of income, TBDSSAB will accept the completed application with as much of the information requested on page 17 of the application as possible. The completed application will be held by the Intake and Eligibility Supervisor and processed once proof of income is submitted.
- If the individual plans to apply for Ontario Works (OW), the application can be submitted 10 days prior to release. Once approved by OW, TBDSSAB will work with the individual to gather any outstanding documentation for the housing application.

Section 5.5 – Age & Ability to Live Independently

- An individual shall be deemed capable of living independently if they are able to do so with the aid of support services, and if it can be reasonably demonstrated that such services will be provided in a reliable and consistent manner. The presence of support services shall not disqualify an individual from eligibility, provided that these services enable the individual to fulfill the responsibilities of their tenancy, including maintaining the unit in accordance with the terms of their lease agreement, respecting the rights of other tenants, and complying with all applicable rules and regulations. Documentation of a service plan or commitment from a support service provider may be requested to confirm the adequacy of support. Should a tenant requiring support services refuse those services during

tenancy, the eligibility for ongoing tenancy may be revoked. This provision is intended to ensure equal access to housing for those with support needs while maintaining health, safety, and peaceful enjoyment for all tenants.

Section 5.12 – Alternative Housing

Intent:

To identify the special rules for Homeless or Hard-to-House applicants applying for RGI assistance with an Alternative Housing Provider.

Eligibility Criteria:

- An Alternative housing provider has a mandate to provide housing to households that are Homeless **or** Hard-to-House. Alternative housing units are offered to applicants who are homeless or hard-to-house from the transitional housing waiting list and in accordance with the policies set out in the legislation.

Operational Considerations:

- Applicants will be requested to complete a secondary application with alternative housing providers outlining more detailed information about the applicant's situation and the supports required and/or received.
- Supportive or Transitional housing providers can refuse to offer a unit to a household if the selection of the household would be contrary to its mandate.
- Applicants who are Homeless and/or Hard-to-House, that are applying for RGI assistance with a housing provider, can be exempted from the HSA requirements around provision of information and reporting changes where the service manager or Alternative Housing provider determines they are not able to meet these requirements.
- Applicant households reserve the right to appeal any decision relating to housing applicants through the Internal Review Process.

Section 5.13 – Special Priority for Victims of Domestic Violence

- The abused member is subject to Human Trafficking.

Section 5.15 – High Needs Homeless Waitlist Category

It is recommended that the High Needs Homeless (HNH) Community Housing waitlist category is deleted and instead replaced by the TBDSSAB's Transitional and Long-Term Supportive Housing application process.

In 2016, through Report No.: 2016-17, the local rules were enhanced to include the HNH waitlist to assist in addressing the significant increase in the homeless population in the District of Thunder Bay. Administration recommended the creation of the HNH waitlist category as there were very few options aside from emergency shelters to support individuals experiencing homelessness. Since that time, the TBDSSAB has invested in the creation of 239 transitional and long-term supportive housing (TLTSH)

units with an additional 72 units being established through the 2025/26 Homelessness Prevention Program (HPP) capital funds. Additionally, there have also been significant investments in TLTSH programs outside of the TBDSSAB, such as the 59-unit transitional program facility on Junot Avenue that will be administered by the Indigenous Friendship Centre and Metis Nation of Ontario. Once these units come online there will be 370 TLTSH units created.

With the addition of a significant number of TLTSH units, Administration has created an application and referral process with a significant number of TLTSH providers that will be participating. This new process will run independently of the Community Housing waitlist and participants may receive a portable housing allowance for use in the private housing market upon completion of the TLTSH program.

The new TLTSH effectively replaces the need for the HNH waitlist category and offers better assurances that individuals will be provided with opportunities for successful housing outcomes.

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

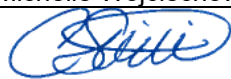

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

CONCLUSION

It is concluded that this report provides the Board with information on the changes and additions to the Local Service Standards, resulting from the regulatory changes to the HSA and changes to local programs.

REFERENCE MATERIALS

None

PREPARED BY:	Aaron Park, Manager, Housing and Homelessness Programs Michelle Wojciechowski, Manager, Intake and Eligibility
SIGNATURE	
APPROVED BY	Crystal Simeoni, Director, Integrated Social Services Division
SIGNATURE	
SUBMITTED BY:	Ken Ranta, Chief Executive Officer