



Dignity, Respect & Quality of Life

Annual Report | 2025



THE DISTRICT OF THUNDER BAY
SOCIAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION BOARD

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2025 Highlights

March

Changes to Ontario Works employment services take effect.

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March

Magnus Theatre in Education partnership: Collective Creation Project performance.

April

Minister Flack visits Thunder Bay and receives a tour of HPP funded projects.



July

OKC soft-opens new child care program via CWELCC.

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July

Shelter House re-launches SOS Program.

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September

Housing Anniversaries

>> Page 9

Northern Linkage grand opening

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October

Special constables announced.

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October

Professional Education Day hosted in Thunder Bay.

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November

Thunder Bay Art Gallery partnership: Seniors in Studio program begins.



Additional emergency shelter spaces added to service system.

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Message from the Chair

On behalf of the TBDSSAB Board of Directors, I am pleased to present the 2025 Annual Report.

Throughout the report, there is a common thread of partnerships, collaboration, and programs working together to meet people where they are. We, as a community, are all in this together.

We are halfway through the 2024-2027 Strategic Plan and have already made 62% progress on its objectives. I thank the TBDSSAB staff and administration for upholding the Board's strategic vision and championing progress in the work that you do.

My time as Chair has been a heartwarming and eye-opening experience. Thank you to my fellow Board members, the TBDSSAB team, and our community partners for all that you do to support the most vulnerable in our communities. I am proud of the work that we've done in my time as Chair since 2024, and I look forward to seeing what's to come in the year ahead.

Thank you to our community for your support and trust in 2025. We couldn't do what we do without you.

Brian Hamilton
Chair (2024-2025)



Message from the CEO

The annual report is an opportunity to reflect on all that we accomplished together in 2025.

This past year demonstrated a balance between planning for the future, finding solutions for present challenges, and celebrating the end-result of projects put in motion in the past. We celebrated grand openings, program launches, and entered the next phase of changes that have been in progress for years. We funded interim solutions to support programs and service systems while continuing to advocate for long-term solutions. And we researched, planned, and entered agreements for projects and initiatives that will be announced in 2026.

More details can be found in the Highlights timeline on page one.

Partnerships are essential to the work that we do, and 2025 brought us opportunities to partner with new sectors. I am grateful to Magnus Theatre and Thunder Bay Art Gallery for joining us in our mission to humanize the people we serve through their Collective Creation Project and Seniors in Studio programs.

On behalf of team TBDSSAB, I thank our Board of Directors for their steadfast support and clear leadership in shaping direction, strengthening our impact, and ensuring we continue serving our community with purpose, compassion and accountability. I also thank our community partners, our staff team and the people we serve for being part of our story in 2025.

Ken Ranta
Chief Executive Officer



About Us

Who We Are, What We Do

Mission

TBDSSAB delivers provincially mandated services on behalf of the citizens of the District of Thunder Bay.

What We Aspire To Be

Vision

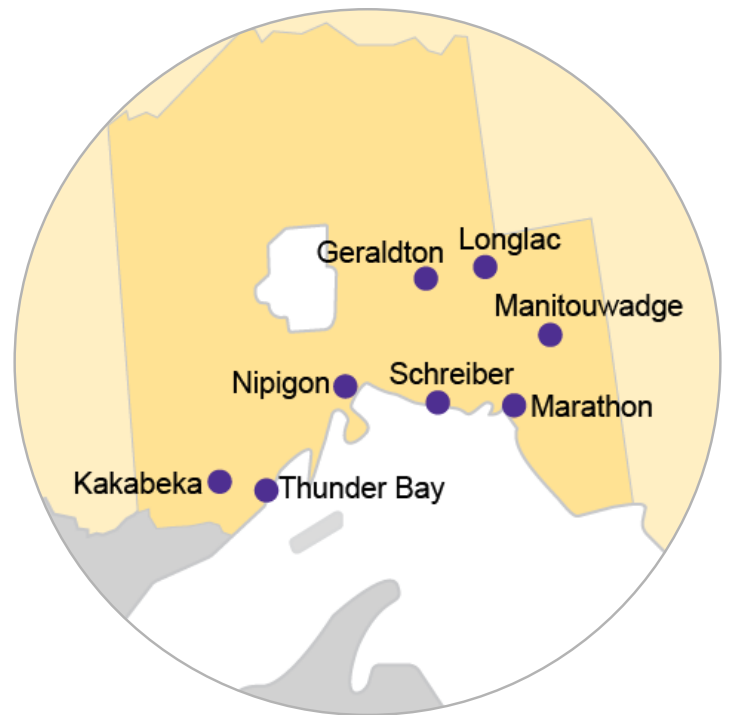
TBDSSAB provides quality services within the context of a commitment to social justice and recognition of people's potential to achieve self-sufficiency.

What We Live By

Values

At TBDSSAB, we:

- Respect
- Accept
- Collaborate
- Understand
- Are Empathetic
- Have Integrity
- Promote Wellness



TBDSSAB was established by the Province of Ontario on April 1, 1999 through the enactment of the District Social Services Administration Board (DSSAB) Act. It is one of 47 service managers mandated by the Province to deliver social services.

Our service district includes 15 municipalities which appoint representatives to our Board of Directors through their municipal councils. As well, the Board of Directors includes an elected representative from the Territories without Municipal Organization.

There are eight TBDSSAB offices across the District.

Our Team

At TBDSSAB, we believe in taking care of the people who are busy taking care of others. That's why we are building a culture of inclusion, belonging, and wellbeing.

Highlights from 2025

In 2025, the Human Resources team made meaningful improvements to better support staff. The team upgraded to Sparkrock 365 and carefully tested the new payroll and benefits system to ensure accuracy and reliable service. Value-based interview practices were introduced to support fair and inclusive hiring, along with the launch of a new careers website and improved job postings on social media. A job shadowing program was also implemented to support learning and career growth. In addition, HR drop-in sessions were launched, and flexible work options were expanded, including flex time and remote work opportunities for eligible staff.

2025 Highlights

- **171** TBDSSAB Staff
- **17** staff celebrated years of service milestones ranging from 5-35 years
- **26** new employees joined TBDSSAB
- **5** employees celebrated their retirement



Our Board



Brian Hamilton, 2025 Chair (Right)

Jim Vezina, 2025 Vice-Chair (Left)



Albert Aiello



Ken Boshcoff



Anne-Marie Bourgeault



Meghan Chomut



Chris Eby
(March -)



Kasey Etreni



Greg Johnsen



Kathleen Lynch



Elaine Mannisto



Jim Moffat



Dominic Pasqualino



Mark Thibert
(Jan-July)

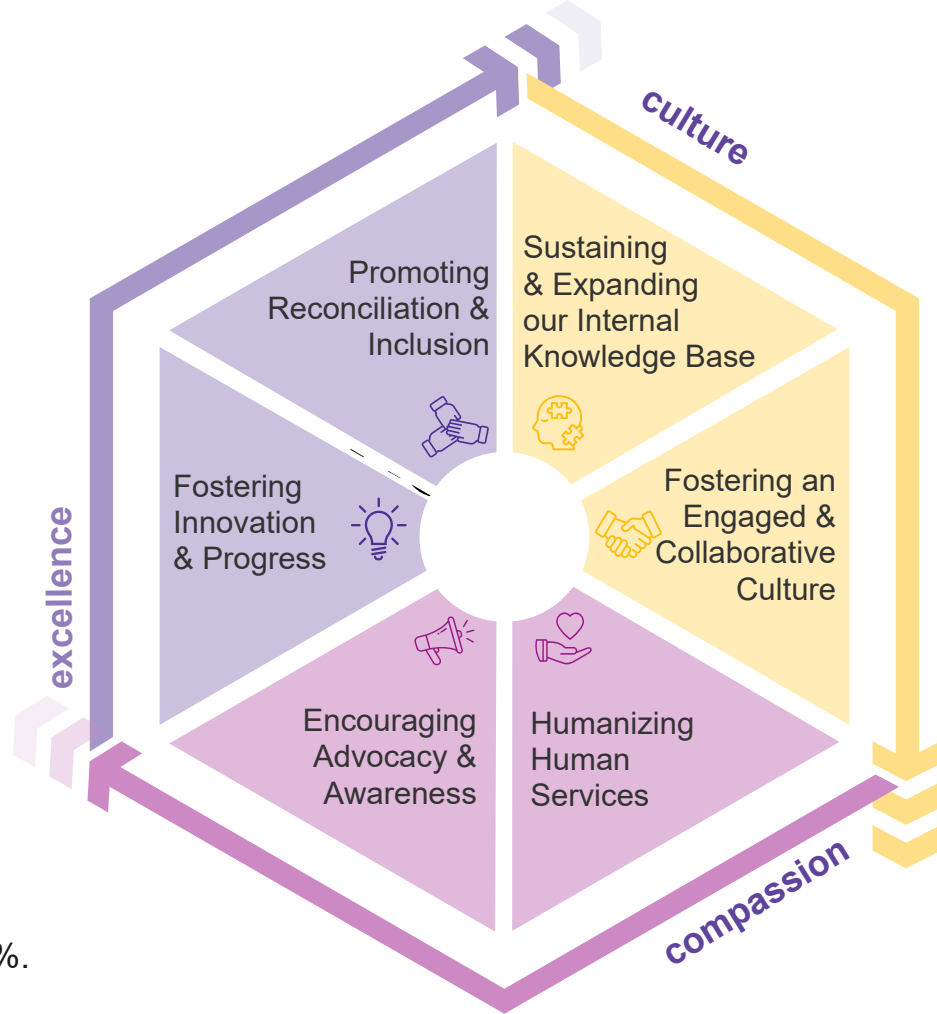


Gordon Cuthbertson
(Aug -)

Strategic Plan

The 2024-2027 Strategic Plan focuses on priority areas related to stabilized support services, an enhanced people-centered approach, and organizational excellence. To achieve this, TBDSSAB has set three strategic directions and six strategies for 2024-2027 (see graphic).

As of December 31, 2025, the overall progress on the plan is 64%.



Advocacy

The Board is committed to ongoing advocacy in response to local service system needs. In 2025, ten position papers were formally presented at delegation meetings with government officials at the Rural Ontario Municipal Association (ROMA) and Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) conferences.

2025 Highlights:

- The Board advocated for a multi-ministry supportive housing strategy, as well as changes to funding formulas and policies to develop affordable and supportive housing.
- The Board advocated for a separate process for community housing providers via the Landlord-Tenant Board.
- The Board advocated for funding to support a two-year community policing pilot project and multi-ministry Release from Custody strategy.
- The Board advocated for increases to social assistance shelter rates.
- The Board advocated for changes to the RECE wage structure and for a provincial workforce development strategy.

Program Highlights

Richard's Story

Richard has been involved with TBDSSAB for a little over two years. Born in Beardmore, Richard moved to Thunder Bay in 2023 and accessed emergency shelter at Salvation Army. Richard applied for Ontario Works and worked with a Transitional Outreach and Support Worker (TOSW) to find housing. They also helped connect him to a doctor. "I have a pacemaker because of 45 years of addiction. I realized addictions were going to kill me, and enough is enough."

Richard dedicated himself to recovery. Today, Richard is 2.5 years substance-free and proud of the life he's built. He attributes his success to regular attendance at appointments, staying connected with his workers, and having the support of family. "I'm grateful for myself and mom."

"I'm proud of all the hard work I have done and having my own space, being able to care for myself and a home."

Intake & Eligibility

TBDSSAB's programs and services are accessed through our Intake & Eligibility team. We work with people to connect them with the services that best fit their needs. The Intake & Eligibility team manages wait lists and applications for TBDSSAB programs. Our team also has Outreach Workers in the community supporting homelessness.

2025 Highlights

- **3,633** calls received by Intake each month (average)
- **181** visitors to TBDSSAB HQ intake area per day (average)
- **1,124** outreach engagements



TBDSSAB staff, tenants, and Chair celebrating the 50th anniversary of Elizabeth Court.

Housing Operations

TBDSSAB is service system manager for community housing in the District of Thunder Bay. We provide rent-geared-to-income housing and manage a centralized housing wait list. Our Housing Operations team takes care of our tenants and properties. Our tenants have access to Tenant Support Workers (TSWs) if they need extra help staying healthy and housed.

2025 Highlights

- **2,411** direct-owned community housing units
- **3,222** total community housing units supported, including non-profit housing providers
- **11,124** TSW visits

Housing Safety Unit

In 2025, TBDSSAB and the Thunder Bay Police Service (TBPS) launched the Housing Safety Unit (HSU). Through HSU, dedicated Special Constables have been hired to offer on-site supports at TBDSSAB-owned properties in Thunder Bay.

Housing Anniversaries

In September, TBDSSAB celebrated 50 years of safe, affordable housing for seniors at three properties built in 1975. Celebrations were held with tenants, staff, and board members at Fisher Court in Geraldton, and Matthews Court and Elizabeth Court in Thunder Bay.



TBDSSAB staff and educators from funded programs at professional learning event, October 2025.

Child Care & Early Years Programs

TBDSSAB manages the child care and early years service system for the District of Thunder Bay. We fund and support most licensed child care and EarlyON programs in our District. TBDSSAB manages the child care wait list for the programs we fund. Families can pay less for child care through fee subsidies and the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care program (CWELCC).

2025 Highlights

- **2,318** children served in child care programs
- **258** families receiving fee subsidies
- **4,219** children served in EarlyON programs
- **27,059** EarlyON child visits

Professional Learning

TBDSSAB held a full day education event on October 23, 2025 themed: Rooted In Hope: Growing Imagination, Connection, and Wonder in Early Childhood. Over 400 educators participated.

Child Care Expansion

With Federal and Provincial support, TBDSSAB is on track to add 196 licensed child care spaces to the service system by the end of 2026. In 2025, the first of these new CWELCC spaces was announced through the opening of the Our Kids Count Early Learning Centre. The remainder will be announced in 2026.



The new Our Kids Count Early Learning Centre opened in July 2025 as part of our plans to add 196 CWELCC spaces by 2026.



Athena's Story

Families accessing child care from programs funded by TBDSSAB can trust that their child is receiving high quality care.

We provide guidance and mentorship to ensure all programs we fund on implementation of 'How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's pedagogy for the early years' across programs funded by TBDSSAB. This includes making sure programming aligns with the four foundations of Belonging, Engagement, Expression, and Wellbeing.

Caregivers deserve peace of mind knowing that their child is in good hands. We are grateful for the service providers that love what they do and make sure it shows in the services they provide.

Athena, a parent to a child enrolled

at Sleeping Giant Child Care Services, is especially grateful for her family's experience.

"Our experience has been nothing short of exceptional. From the moment we walked through the doors, we felt welcomed, supported, and confident that our daughter was in the very best hands."

"It's clear they are deeply invested in the children's development and well-being. They create an environment that is nurturing, engaging, and fun, while also encouraging learning and exploration every single day."



Northern Linkage's "Ann Potvin Place" opened in September 2025 after receiving HPP funding through TBDSSAB in 2023.

Housing & Homelessness Programs

TBDSSAB is service system manager for homelessness prevention programs in the District of Thunder Bay. We work with community partners to fund programs that prevent or address homelessness. This includes the emergency shelter system. Our team also helps people afford their rent through rent supports and funding for the community housing system.

2025 Highlights

- **115** people housed from the High Needs Homeless waitlist
- **45,327** stays at emergency shelters.

Transitional Housing

In 2025, TBDSSAB continued its strategy of investing in the development of transitional and long-term supportive housing options. Through community partnerships, a combined total of 70 new transitional and long-term supportive spaces were funded in 2025.

Emergency Shelter

In 2025, TBDSSAB worked with four Emergency Shelter providers to ensure those experiencing homelessness had a warm place to sleep. Through the dedication and compassion of the Salvation Army Journey to Life Centre, Thunder Bay Shelter House, Grace Place Out of the Cold Program and the Urban Abbey, the emergency shelter system was expanded to 256 beds to meet any increase in demand. At no point was the emergency shelter system at full capacity—there was always room for anyone seeking shelter.



After a multi-year hiatus, Shelter House's SOS Program re-opened in July 2025 with support from TBDSSAB and other funders.

Sal's Story

When Sal came to Urban Abbey Transitional Housing, he was experiencing housing insecurity and unemployment and had been staying at the Salvation Army for several months. After connecting with services at NorWest, he applied for Ontario Works and was referred through TBDSSAB to the Homes for Good program at St. Joseph's Care Group. Through this connection, Sal was matched with a unit at Urban Abbey Transitional Housing.

Sal arrived motivated to work, bringing experience in automotive mechanics and painting. However a past charge was making it difficult for him to access employment. After attending a NEW employment presentation at Urban Abbey, he learned about the record suspension program offered through the John Howard Society and submitted his paperwork to begin the process.

As Urban Abbey continued to expand, the construction manager began looking to add more people to his crew and considered the occupants at UA first. Although Sal's record suspension was still in process, he was hired based on his experience and his eagerness to return to full time work. Sal now works as a painter and has been steadily employed full time since December 2025.

With stable housing and steady work, Sal has been able to focus on other important steps forward, including connecting with healthcare supports and developing a plan to address previous debts. With the support of a circle of care that connects housing, employment, and community resources, he continues moving toward building stability in his life.



Social Assistance Programs

TBDSSAB delivers Ontario Works for the District of Thunder Bay. Ontario Works is a provincial program that provides income support and case management. Our OW Caseworkers offer people the support or referrals they need to enter the workforce. We work closely with community partners to help our clients reach their personal and employment goals.

2025 Highlights

- **2,459** average monthly caseload, supporting 4,010 people
- **2,509** OW applications received (209 per month average)
- **350** emergency assistance applications
- **368** exits to employment (15% of caseload)

Client Survey

TBDSSAB conducted its biennial Ontario Works Client Satisfaction Survey in 2025. The results demonstrated that OW clients are predominantly positive with the quality of service they receive. There were some comments regarding the limited funds they receive as OW clients, which reinforced TBDSSAB Board's advocacy to the province for changes to benefits rates.

Employment Services

On March 1, 2025, TBDSSAB entered a new phase of Integrated Employment Services (IES) through MCCSS. With IES, employment supports are no longer provided as part of Ontario Works program delivery. Caseworkers refer clients to Employment Ontario (EO) when they ready to participate meaningfully in employment related activities. While this program change was significant for everyone, staff adapted quickly while keeping clients' needs as the top priority.



Melissa's Story

Melissa's journey illustrates the impact of an integrated approach to social services delivery, and the importance of planning for programs that meet people where they are.

Born and raised in Thunder Bay, Melissa faced challenges with substance use and trauma. After being incarcerated, she reached out for support to turn things around.

Melissa accessed financial support and an Ontario Works caseworker through TBDSSAB. However, she faced challenges with a lack of long-term services offered for substance abuse, long wait lists for treatment, and lack of post-treatment beds for women. Despite the challenges, she pushed through and successfully finished a treatment program.

"I found the recovery community in Thunder Bay and people with lived

experience really carried me through the difficult parts of my journey," says Melissa.

At one-year substance free, Melissa was out of work and at risk of homelessness. TBDSSAB's Transitional Outreach and Support Workers (TOSW) connected Melissa with Elizabeth Fry Society Northwestern Ontario (EFSNWO). In partnership with TBDSSAB, EFSNWO offers transitional housing options for women and gender-diverse individuals after they are released from custody.

"Elizabeth Fry stepped in and offered me a safe place to stay. They gave me empowerment and taught me how to live independently in a healthy way."

Now 2.5 years substance-free, Melissa's lived experience and resilience led her to a job as System Navigator at EFSNWO. "I'm looking forward to helping people who are in need, just like I was."

"There is a way out. Find your people and lean on them. Good things take time, but they will come as long as you don't give up."

Capital Projects



TBDSSAB is dedicated to environmentally sustainable practices. After achieving environmental sustainability goals from previous strategic plans, TBDSSAB continues to work toward a minimized environmental footprint while reducing the operating costs in our housing portfolio.

In 2025, TBDSSAB completed various projects to enhance the environmental stewardship lens of its housing portfolio through capital projects.

2025 Highlights

- Combined total of 596 appliances, and insulation in 206 units, upgraded for energy-efficiency through TBDSSAB and the Save on Energy Affordability Program.
- 3 buildings (226 units) received mechanical upgrades to increase energy efficiency.
- 3 buildings (34 units) had windows replaced to increase insulation value and reduce heat loss
- 4 properties (243 units) received LED lighting updates to improve energy efficiency and ensure TBDSSAB buildings meet the requirements of the "Products Containing Mercury Regulations".

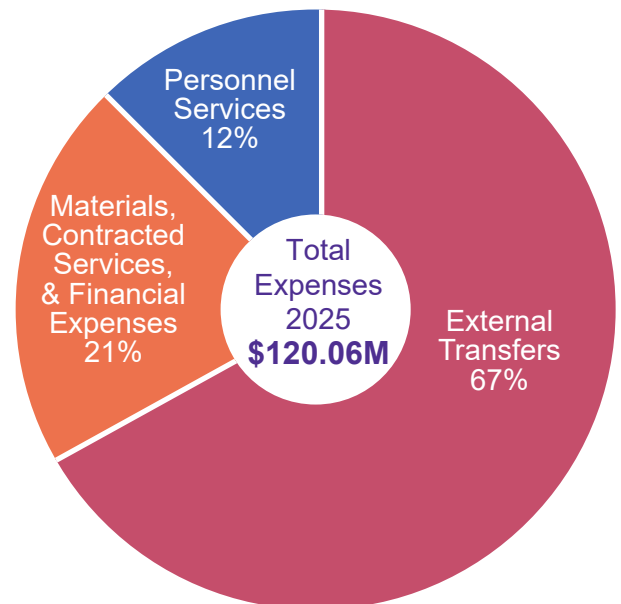
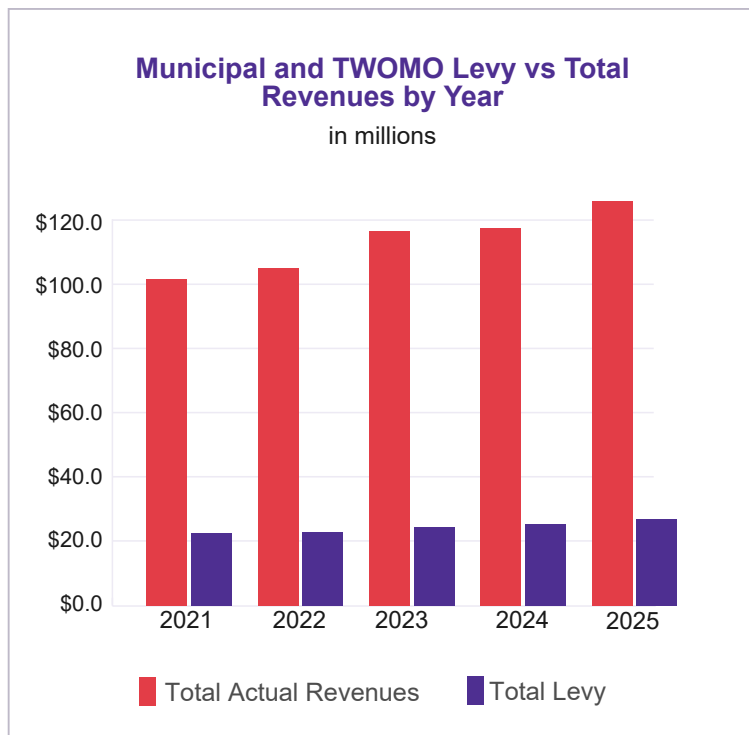
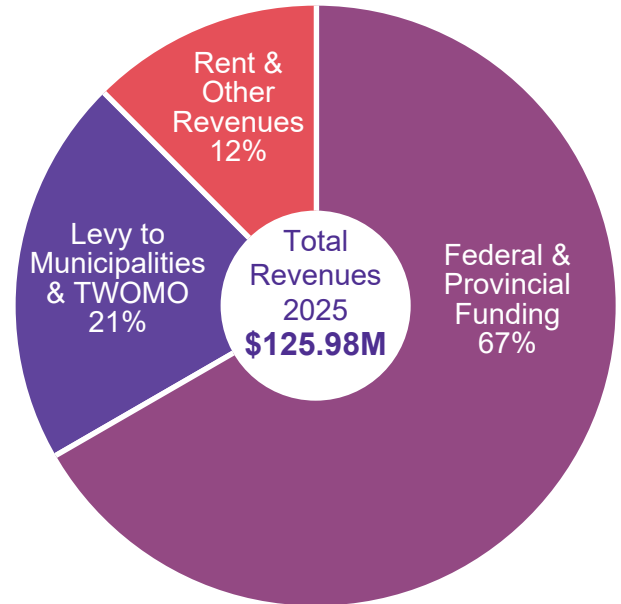


Manion Court received several capital upgrades during 2025.

Financial Position

Balance Sheet

	2025	2024
Cash and Cash Equivalents	33,791,201	35,359,061
Marketable Securities	36,567,906	28,888,966
Client Benefit Advances	1,424,889	1,780,399
Accounts Receivable	4,159,465	3,847,161
Total Financial Assets	75,943,461	69,875,587
Accounts Payable	22,784,882	21,648,182
Deferred Revenue	5,547,521	5,409,719
Long-term Debt	4,161,186	6,131,472
Employee Benefit Obligations	2,642,218	2,791,989
Asset Retirement Obligations	11,386,808	11,989,360
Total Liabilities	46,522,615	47,970,722
Net Financial Assets (Debt)	29,420,846	21,904,865
Non-Financial Assets	36,366,871	37,742,896
Accumulated Surplus	65,787,717	59,647,761



*TWOMO = Territories Without Municipal Organization

2025
SSA



**THE DISTRICT OF THUNDER BAY
SOCIAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION BOARD**



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