



COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING AGENDA

Healthy Communities without Poverty

Date: Wednesday, January 27, 2021

Time: 12:00 PM

Location: By video conference while pandemic protocols are in place

<https://zoom.us/j/94639139967?pwd=ZEdWc0lZTHhpOVMxR1ROeUFiN3FkUT09>

Meeting ID: 946 3913 9967

Passcode: 0935577

One tap mobile

+16132093054,,94639139967#,,,,*0935577# Canada

+16473744685,,94639139967#,,,,*0935577# Canada

Dial by your location

+1 613 209 3054 Canada

+1 647 374 4685 Canada

+1 647 558 0588 Canada

Members: Councillor Dan Roveda (Chair), Councillor Dave Mendicino (Vice-Chair), Mayor Dean Backer, Councillor Mac Bain, Mayor Jane Dumas, Councillor Terry Kelly, Councillor Mark King, Councillor Chris Mayne, Mayor Dan O'Mara, Councillor Scott Robertson, Representative Amanda Smith, Councillor Bill Vrebosch.

Item	Topic
1.0	1.1 Call to Order 1.2 Declaration of Conflict of Interest
2.0	Opening remarks by the Chair

Item	Topic
3.0	<p>Approval of the Agenda for January 27, 2020</p> <p><u>MOTION #CSC01-2021</u> THAT the Community Services Committee accepts the Agenda as presented.</p>
4.0	<p>DELEGATIONS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opioid Use in Nipissing District – Alan McQuarrie (CCCNIP)/ John Mitchell (NBPSDHU) • Barriers to Housing & Support Services - Caitlin Dobratz of the AIDS Committee of North Bay and Area
5.0	<p>CONSENT AGENDA - <i>All items in the consent agenda are voted on collectively. The Chair will call out each item for consideration of discussion. Any item can be singled out for separate vote; then, only the remaining items will be voted on collectively.</i></p> <p><u>MOTION #CSC02-2021</u> That the Committee receives for Consent Agenda items 5.1 to 5.6.</p> <p>5.1 CS01-21 Child Care Early Years Act Review</p> <p>5.2 CS02-21 Early Learning and Child Care Innovation Program – Funding Application</p> <p>5.3 HS01-21 Canada – Ontario Housing Benefit (COHB) Update</p> <p>5.4 HS02-21 Shelter Update</p> <p>5.5 HS06-21 Housing Programs and Funding Overview</p> <p>5.6 SSE01-21 Provincial Poverty Reduction Strategy</p>
6.0	<p>MANAGERS REPORTS – none at this time</p>
7.0	<p>OTHER BUSINESS/CORRESPONDENCE</p>
8.0	<p>NEXT MEETING DATE Wednesday, February 24 (Finance and Administration Committee), 2021 at 12:00 PM</p>
9.0	<p>ADJOURNMENT</p> <p><u>MOTION #CSC03-2021</u></p>

Item	Topic
	<i>Resolved</i> THAT the Community Services Committee meeting be adjourned at p.m.

BRIEFING NOTE CS01-21

For information For Approval

Date: January 27, 2021

Purpose: Public Consultation on Proposed Regulatory Amendments to the *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014*

Prepared by: Lynn Démoré-Pitre, Director Children's Services

Reviewed by: Catherine Matheson, CAO

Briefing Note CS01-21 on Public Consultation on Proposed Regulatory Amendments to the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014 is for information purposes.

BACKGROUND:

The [*Child Care and Early Year Act, 2014 \(CCEYA\)*](#) came into effect on August 31, 2015.

The CCEYA replaced the Day Nurseries Act (DNA) and established new guidelines for the early years and child care sector in Ontario, including regulations governing licensing standards and child care funding.

The CCEYA also modernized the early years and child care sector by:

- setting system-wide goals;
- clarifying rules on which programs required a license to operate child care;
- setting requirements for licensed home-based child care and unlicensed child care;
- identifying the roles of the province and service system managers; and
- creating new enforcement and compliance tools.

Over the last five years, the Ministry of Education has continued to make legislative and regulatory changes to the CCEYA to ensure it corresponded to the changing needs of the early years and child care sector.

The CCEYA requires that a review of the legislation be conducted within five years of its coming into effect and that a public report be prepared highlighting the results of the review.

On July 7, 2020, the Minister of Education announced the start of the review and launched two online surveys (one for families/parents and the other for the sector). The surveys were open for two weeks between July 7th and July 21st.

From July to September 2020, the Ministry of Education held targeted, structured engagement sessions with various stakeholders throughout the province.

The Ministry has identified six action areas to improve the early years and child care sector:

- 1) support quality child care and early years settings;
- 2) create flexible options for families and providers;
- 3) update staffing qualifications to support workforce retention;
- 4) clarify requirements for inclusion of children with special needs;
- 5) support Indigenous-led and culturally relevant programming; and
- 6) reduce administrative burden and address technical issues and gaps.

CURRENT STATUS/STEPS TAKEN TO DATE:

On October 2, 2020, the Ministry of Education released the [Strengthening Early Years and Child Care in Ontario](#), a report on the five-year review of the [Child Care and Early Year Act, 2014 \(CCEYA\)](#) (CCEYA) and a public consultation through the posting of the proposed regulatory amendments on the Ontario Regulatory Registry.

The Ministry is proposing regulatory amendments that would address flexibility, responsiveness, qualification requirements, administrative burden, health, and safety. Regulatory proposals, intended to clarify several existing licensing standards and to bring forward technical amendments, are also included in the consultation document.

The regulatory posting was available for public comment until November 20, 2020.

The Children's Services Department worked in collaboration with the district's early years and child care service providers to submit a "local" response to the Ministry's consultation document. Some key points included:

- Recognizing the Ministry's efforts in trying to reduce administrative burden, increase flexibility by providing additional options related to staffing, and possibly increasing the ability to provide additional services to families and children throughout the province (i.e., increased flexibility toward staff qualifications for school age programs, resource consultants and child care supervisors).
- Emphasizing that some of the recommended solutions and amendments could potentially have adverse effects on a sector that is already fragile thereby affecting

the quality of services provided to children (i.e., increasing ratios and group sizes, short-term supply staff would not be required to meet the current minimum qualifications, removing the requirement of direct visual checks of sleeping preschool children, etc.).

- Highlighting that the suggested amendments may provide some temporary relief to service providers, however, a provincial approach and investments are needed to address the ongoing concerns that continue to exasperate the sector (i.e., recruitment and retention of early years and child care professionals, inclusive programs and services, professional learning/mentoring opportunities, program sustainability, etc.).

The Children's Services team also took part in consultations and submissions lead by NOSDA and OMSSA.

COMMUNICATION PLAN:

The information related to the public consultation was shared with community partners and service providers who may be impacted by the proposed changes. Individual agencies were encouraged to review the information and to send comments/feedback to the Ministry.

NEXT STEPS:

The proposed regulatory amendments would come into effect on a date that is still to be determined, however if approved, it is anticipated that the effective date would be no earlier than January 1, 2021, with most having an anticipated effective date of July 1, 2021.

BRIEFING NOTE CS02-21

For information For Approval

Date: January 27, 2021

Purpose: Early Learning and Child Care Innovation Program – Funding Applications

Prepared by: Lynn Démoré-Pitre, Director Children's Services

Reviewed by: Catherine Matheson, CAO

Briefing Note CS02-21 on funding applications for the Early Learning and Child Care Innovation Program is for information purposes.

BACKGROUND:

On October 30, 2020, the Federal Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Ahmed Hussen, initiated a call for proposals for innovative projects that aim to improve the quality of early learning and child care services across Canada.

The objective of the [Early Learning and Child Care Innovation Program](#) is to support early learning and child care program and service delivery that:

- explore, test and develop innovative approaches; and
- aim to improve the quality, accessibility, affordability, inclusivity and flexibility within the early learning and child care sector.

The government identified that priority would be given to projects that address the needs of families through the next phase of recovery from the pandemic. More specifically, the government was seeking project proposals promoting cultural diversity and inclusion that primarily target children and families with unique early learning and child care needs, including:

- Indigenous families
- lower income families
- families that include children with varying abilities
- newcomer families

- single-parent families
- Black and other racialized families
- families from Francophone and Anglophone minority communities
- families working non-standard hours
- families in underserved communities

Projects that support the next generation of leaders, such as researchers, practitioners and service providers would also be accepted.

Canadian not-for-profit agencies, provincial or territorial entities, municipalities and Indigenous organizations that were interested in receiving federal funding through the [Early Learning and Child Care Innovation Program](#) were encouraged to consult the [applicant guide](#) for additional information on eligibility and the steps to submit a proposal.

The original deadline to submit proposals was December 3, 2020; however, the deadline was later extended to January 7, 2021.

CURRENT STATUS/STEPS TAKEN TO DATE:

The following three project proposals were submitted to the Early Learning and Child Care Innovation Program for consideration.

Strengthening the ELCC Sector - Increasing the number of RECEs in the Nipissing District

Project Budget (not including in-kind contributions): \$2,035,995.

The overall aim of this project is to increase the number of registered Early Childhood Educators (RECEs) working in the licensed child care system in the District of Nipissing, thereby increasing the quality of care and accessibility to care for the families.

Throughout the District and across the province, early learning and licensed child care providers have identified many barriers in recruiting and retaining RECEs. The shortage of RECEs prior to the COVID-19 pandemic was such that licensed child care providers were operating at a lower capacity than what their license allowed. Overall, this problem has only worsened since the pandemic began.

The goal of this project is two-fold: (1) providing funding to support the cost of upgrading courses and (2) increasing support provided to those participating in this project.

- (1) Fully fund the ECE Apprenticeship Program for front-line staff who are working in licensed child care centres, reducing the cost barriers in completing the program. This will include all upfront costs of registering for programs, purchasing textbooks, access to technology (computer, internet access, etc.), as well as travel costs associated with the program for in-person classes or for placements outside of current employment (if any).
- (2) In order to better support front-line staff, more coaching and support would be provided by ELCC Advisors, including in-person modeling and feedback on the staff's implementation of program concepts. This mentorship role will help those staff participating in the project to overcome barriers and succeed in attaining their ECE certification. Increasing the support provided to those who are completing the ECE Apprenticeship program will help increase the completion rate for the program and will lead to staff who are feeling more competent and capable in their roles.

West Ferris Community Hub

Project Budget (not including in-kind contributions): \$2,969,538.

- Capital and professional costs related to construction: \$2,129,931.
- Program delivery and start-up costs: \$839,607.

The goal of this project is to construct a Community Hub in the West Ferris neighbourhood to address the gap in accessibility to early years programs and services for low-income and hard to reach families.

The West Ferris Community Hub (WFCH) would include a shared office space, early years program space, community kitchen, and outdoor play area. This would allow current EarlyON services to expand to include specialized, evening, weekend, and summer programming, especially for lower-income families who have been unable to access these services in the past. The community kitchen would allow for programming opportunities such as a teaching kitchen, baby food making, and other specialized programs to support families in developing life skills such as budgeting, meal planning, cooking and social skills.

The WFCH will also allow other community partners to use the shared space to offer their programs and services, thereby increasing access to services for hard to reach and vulnerable families in the West Ferris neighbourhood. In turn, this can lead to improved health, social and economic outcomes for families.

To ensure the success of the WFCH, an Early Years Program Specialist (EYPS) would help coordinate programs and services delivered within the space. Further to stakeholder, service provider, community partner and parent consultations/surveys, the EYPS would be responsible for doing community outreach to further establish community partnerships/connections to bring additional programs and services to the community hub for families with children from infancy up to 6 years of age.

Overall, the WFCH could provide a means for an alternative approach to service delivery to better meet the needs of families and children in this community by being flexible and community driven.

The WFCH will be constructed on land that is owned by the Nipissing District Housing Corporation (NDHC). (DNSSAB is the NDHC's sole shareholder).

Teaching Lodge

Project Budget (not including in-kind contributions): \$2,999,889.

- Capital and professional costs related to construction: \$2,143,661.
- Program costs: \$856,228.

The overall aim of this project is to create a Teaching Lodge to facilitate the exchange of knowledge and teachings from Elders and Knowledge Keepers to the younger Indigenous population, as well as the broader community.

The availability of Indigenous led child care and early years programs in the community is an important step towards reconciliation. Colonization and residential schools have impacted the traditional roles in the Indigenous community. Elders were a highly valued knowledge resource and were relied upon to teach the youth the culture, language, and ways of being. This role has been drastically changed and it has resulted in a loss of identity for most of the younger generation. By recognizing the intergenerational trauma that exists for Indigenous people, we also acknowledge the legacy of residential schools, colonization and the work needed to move forward by removing barriers, and reconciling relationships with Indigenous people. Today, there still exists a gap between the Elders and the youth in the Indigenous community.

The goal of the Teaching Lodge is to provide traditional and symbolic space to revitalize that connection between Elders and youth. This opportunity will optimize teaching roles to be established and to enable self-identity of Indigenous youth to be reinforced.

The North Bay Indigenous Hub will direct the Teaching Lodge. They will hire a Facilitator to work with Elders to develop a curriculum around the different seasons and various Indigenous teachings. In addition, the Teaching Lodge can also allow for cross-cultural awareness and education opportunities for the broader North Bay community.

The Teaching Lodge will be constructed on the same land as the North Bay Indigenous Hub which is owned by the NDHC. (DNSSAB is the NDHC's sole shareholder).

COMMUNICATION PLAN:

The Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) Innovation Program expects to make funding decisions in April 2021. Once the decision is received, DNSSAB will inform the Board as well as the community partners involved in the projects of the outcome.

DNSSAB Children's Services Team will continue to work with the Communications & Executive Coordinator to ensure that all required communication and messaging pertaining to these projects meet the communications protocols established by the Federal Government.

NEXT STEPS:

Should DNSSAB be granted funding for any of the project proposals, community partners, service providers and stakeholders involved in the project(s) will be contacted to move forward with project activities.

BRIEFING NOTE HS01-21

For Information or For Approval

Date: January 27, 2021

Purpose: Canada – Ontario Housing Benefit (COHB) - Update

Prepared by: Stacey Cyopeck, Director of Housing Programs

Reviewed by: Catherine Matheson, CAO

This report provides an update regarding the implementation of the COHB rent subsidy program and is for information purposes.

BACKGROUND:

- The COHB program is a \$1.46 billion federal-provincial rental subsidy program that launched on April 1, 2020, jointly funded through the CMHC-Ontario Bilateral Agreement under the 2017 National Housing Strategy and provincially delivered.
- The purpose is to increase the affordability of rental housing by providing an income-tested, portable housing subsidy directly to eligible households that are on, or eligible to be on, the social housing waiting lists or to those currently living in community housing.
- The program is modeled and builds on the former provincial Portable Housing Benefit – Special Priority Policy (PHB-SPP), which it now replaces.
- The program is administered by the Ministry of Finance (MOF). MOF determines eligibility, processes monthly COHB payments, and completes annual reviews.
- Local priority groups in Nipissing District are:
 - Victims of Domestic Violence & Human Trafficking
 - Persons experiencing *or* at risk of homelessness
 - Indigenous persons
- The program will provide up to the following amounts to households in the District of Nipissing Social Services Administration Board's service area for the first two fiscal years:
 - 2020-21: **\$195,475**
 - 2021-22: **\$256,130**

REPORT:

- DNSSAB staff work collaboratively with the following community partners to assist applicants with COHB applications:
 - LIPI
 - NMHHSS
 - Crisis Centre North Bay
 - Transition House

- Indigenous Friendship Centre

- Staff were notified on December 10, 2020 that 100% of DNSSAB's planning allocation for 2020-21 (\$195,475) has been committed
- Nipissing District has served 90 applicant households through COHB. These households were either on, or eligible to be on the social housing waitlist.
- On December 23, 2020 the DNSSAB received confirmation from MMAH that the forecasts indicate that the COHB program funding for 2020-21 was fully committed as well.
- Additional allocation announcements will be available in April 2021.

RISK IDENTIFICATION & MITIGATION:

COHB planning allocations are provided on a “use it or lose it” basis, and funding from one fiscal year cannot be reallocated to future years. For this reason, annual planning allocations that cannot be fully taken up within the respective fiscal year may be reallocated by MMAH after December 31 to Service Manager areas with higher take-up rates. At this time, this is not a concern, as the planning allocation for the Nipissing District has been fully committed.

RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN:

The demand for safe, affordable housing within the District has and will continue to be a top priority and it is the DNSSAB's role to facilitate, support and maintain the integrity of the housing continuum through financial programs and assistance.

CONCLUSION:

In summary, the COHB has provided rent subsidy assistance to many citizens of the Nipissing District. Program priorities were met by targeting households who were accessing community partner resources (CCNB, NMHHSS, etc). The COHB program has allowed the DNSSAB to be more flexible in addressing local housing needs and priorities, and create mixed-income communities by diversifying housing options to foster the prevention and reduction of homelessness within the Nipissing District.

BRIEFING NOTE HS02-21

For information or For Decision or For Approval

Date: January 27, 2021

Purpose: Emergency Shelter Day Programming Update

Prepared by: Stacey Cyopeck, Director of Housing Programs

Reviewed by: Catherine Matheson, CAO

The following report HS02-21 provides an update on the addition of Day Programming to the Emergency Shelter Capacity in Nipissing and is for information purposes.

Background:

When the Low Barrier Shelter opened in August, 2020 at 590 Chippewa, it was designed to provide twelve-hour overnight shelter. In September, 2020, the need for day programming, especially during the winter months, was recognized by the DNSSAB and funding through the Social Service Relief Fund (SSRF) was allocated for the creation of this service. These programs were to be offered 12 hours per day, 7 days a week.

Two agencies expressed interest in providing the services. The North Bay Indigenous Friendship Centre agreed to offer the Day Programming on Saturdays and Sundays and use their gymnasium for the program. Nipissing Mental Health Housing and Support Services, already providing overnight services at the Low Barrier Shelter site at 590 Chippewa Street, agreed to provide Day Programming from Monday to Friday. The portables used for the overnight shelter did not offer the space required for the day program, so the lower level of the building at 590 Chippewa that is currently being renovated into the Gateway House 16-unit supported housing, was determined as the best location for the NMHHSS program. The property owner quickly completed renovations so that the program could open on December 23rd, 2020.

Report:

The Day Programming at the North Bay Indigenous Friendship Centre opened on December 12, 2020. Attendance has been steadily rising since the opening (Figure 1). There is a pandemic capacity of 30 individuals at any one time, however, as individuals

leave, others are welcomed in. The NBIFC has initiated programming that includes cultural supports and food that is prepared on site.

Figure 1

North Bay Indigenous Friendship Centre Weekend Day Program	
Date	# of Guests
December 12, 2020	21
December 13, 2020	34
December 19, 2020	30
December 20, 2020	28
December 26, 2020	34
December 27, 2020	52
January 2, 2021	52
January 3, 2021	37

- The LBS Day Program at the Chippewa Site opened on December 23rd, however the program was operating from December 14th to December 22nd at NMHSS's Ferguson Street location while renovations were completed. While attendance numbers for the Day Programming are not available prior to December 23rd, Figure 2 below provides the daily attendance for both the Low Barrier Shelter and Day Programming throughout the holiday season. The pandemic-compliant capacity at the Chippewa day program is 26. The Chippewa day programming offers connection with other services and housing options. Meals are provided through a partnership with the Gathering Place.

Figure 2

Chippewa Low Barrier Shelter		
Date	Day	Night
December 15	Unknown	26
December 16	Unknown	23
December 17	Unknown	24
December 18	Unknown	21
December 19	Unknown	22
December 20	Unknown	26
December 21	Unknown	22
December 22	Unknown	19
December 23	19	25
December 24	22	23
December 25	20	21
December 26	20	21
December 27	21	20

December 28	21	17
December 29	25	21
December 30	18	20
December 31	19	21
January 1	17	25

- The day programming, along with the overnight LBS, has been designed to offer 24/7 supports for individuals experiencing homelessness in the district. The programming provides a place to go once the overnight Low Barrier Shelter closes, but also provides access to support staff and referral to other services and agencies so that guests can be helped out of the cycle of homelessness.

Risks and Mitigation:

- Access to services for individuals experiencing homelessness within the district continues to be challenging.
 - Crisis Centre North Bay and the new Day Programs will continue to offer connections and referrals for supports, housing and treatment options.
 - Within the next year, a Coordinated Access system will be implemented using the Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS) and a standardized prioritized assessment tool, the Vulnerability Index – Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (VI-SPDAT). This will allow for the creation of a shared, by-name list of homeless individuals waiting for support and housing and also provide accurate and timely data to use for planning.
- Shortage of affordable and appropriate housing options to which individuals can be referred.
 - Early in 2021, funded through the Investment in Affordable Housing 2014 Extension, the first 16 units of the new Gateway House will open with supports through Nipissing Mental Health Housing and Support Services. This will provide stable, supported housing for 16 individuals who are currently homeless or at risk of homelessness and living with mental health or addiction issues.
 - Phase 2 of the Gateway House has been funded through the Social Services Relief Fund and will provide up to another 20 units of housing. To meet the funding requirements, this phase must be completed by December 31st, 2021.
- Funding for the LBS and day programming is only available until March 31, 2021.
 - The DNSSAB will continue to advocate to all levels of government for sustainable funding for these services.

Conclusion:

The Day Programming initiated in December 2020 is one more step in the creation of a seamless and collaborative approach to homelessness within the District of Nipissing. While the COVID-19 pandemic continues to cause pressure in the shelter system, as well as increasing challenges for the vulnerable population , it has also provided opportunities for the DNSSAB and its partners to work together to face current and future challenges.

BRIEFING NOTE HS06-21

For Information or For Approval

Date: January 27, 2021

Purpose: Housing Programs and Funding Overview

Prepared by: Stacey Cyopeck, Director of Housing Programs

Reviewed by: Catherine Matheson, CAO

This report provides a general overview of the various housing programs and funding sources and is for information purposes.

REPORT:

The Housing Programs department consists of three (3) main areas of focus which can then be further broken down into specific programs. The three (3) core areas are as follows:

- Homelessness Programs
- Social Housing Programs
- Affordable Housing Programs

Homelessness Programs Breakdown

1) CHPI (Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative)

- 2020-21 Funding Allocation \$1,771,340
- 2021-22 Funding Allocation \$1,771,340
- 2020-21 SSRF Phase I - \$589,200
- 2020-21 SSRF Phase II - \$4,225,615
- 2020-21 SSRF Holdback - \$407,000

The CHPI Program was implemented in January 2013 and is a 100% provincially funded outcomes-based program that aims to prevent and end homelessness by improving access to adequate, suitable, and affordable housing and homelessness services for people experiencing homelessness and for people at-risk of homelessness.

This program provides financial assistance to individuals or families who are homeless or facing homelessness to obtain or maintain housing and can include low-income homeowners and/or renters, as well as those who might receive social assistance.

DNSSAB is funding the following eligible categories and services through CHPI:

a) Emergency Shelter Solutions - services and supports that provide relief or protect households/people who are experiencing homelessness, with the goal of shifting from reliance on emergency shelter solutions to preventative services. Currently under this category, the DNSSAB is funding the following services:

- i. Contracted Emergency Shelter Services – Crisis Centre North Bay
- ii. Emergency Overflow Program – accommodations, travel, food per diems

As noted above the CHPI funding allocation received by the DNSSAB currently provides the CCNB with an annual contracted amount to assist with the Emergency Shelter Services program.

With the onset of the pandemic, and with the CCNB as the only emergency shelter in North Bay, the DNSSAB funded the Low-Barrier Shelter (LBS), funded by both Reaching Home funding and SSRF funding throughout the pandemic.

Under CHPI, the SSRF funding was also utilized to create a space on-site in the lower level of the Gateway project to accommodate a Monday – Friday 12-hour day program space. On the weekends residents attend the North Bay Indigenous Friendship Centre for day programming services, also funded through the SSRF.

The SSRF has further provided funding for a new modular 20-unit housing project to accompany the current 16-bed IAH project already under construction on the same site. The creation of this campus will provide housing with supports, low-barrier shelter services, and mental health and addiction services, all located at one cohesive site in North Bay.

b) Homelessness Prevention - includes services that assist households at risk of homelessness to retain their housing (such as landlord outreach and mediation, shelter diversion programs, emergency financial assistance in the form of payment of rental and/or utilities arrears). Currently under this category, the DNSSAB is funding the following services:

- i. Global Emergency Fund – LIPI
- ii. Contracted Homelessness Prevention Services – LIPI
- iii. Contracted Homelessness Mobile Resources Program – LIPI
- iv. Trusteeship Program – LIPI
- v. DNSSAB Homelessness Prevention Program Direct Client Benefits –
 - i. Rental Arrears, Last Month’s rent / First Month’s rent, Heat / Utility Arrears, Heat / Utility Deposits, Household Appliances – fridge/stove, Beds, Moving & Storage, Heating – Wood/Oil/Propane

c) Housing with Related Supports - includes activities such as providing operating funding for long-term and transitional housing, as well as supports related to the delivery of that housing. Long-term housing is housing that is safe and adequate, and available for the longer term. Transitional housing is housing that is provided for less than one year, which includes the provision of on-site or off-site support services to help individuals move towards independence and self-sufficiency. Currently under this category, the DNSSAB is funding the following services:

- i. Operational requirements for the Gateway House project.

d) CHPI Housing Allowance

- a) 2020-21 Budget \$30,000
- b) 2021-22 Budget \$30,000
- c) 10 - the average number of recipients in 2020

DNSSAB administers Housing Allowance for the chronically homeless through CHPI. These applicants are referred to the program by both LIPI and the Crisis Centre North Bay in an effort to reduce pressures on the shelter. The maximum CHPI Housing Allowance subsidy is \$250/month per recipient household. Once households are stabilized, recipients are transitioned to the regular Housing Allowance Program.

Under CHPI, the DNSSAB received three allocations of emergency COVID funding in the 2020/21 fiscal year, under Social Services Relieve Fund (SSRF).

The SSRF Phase I funding (\$589,200) was disbursed to a total of 21 community social service agencies. The four key priorities, as identified by the community, were Food/Meal Distribution, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), Housing Supports (i.e. Rent/Utility Arrears), and Homelessness/Shelters.

SSRF Phase II funding (\$4,222,615) was secured through the DNSSAB's successful business case submission and the primary use for this funding allocation will be Emergency Shelter Solutions for the continued operation of the Low Barrier Shelter, day programming, Overflow, and Isolation through to March 31st, 2021, as well as Capital funding for the Low Barrier Shelter and Transitional Housing.

The plan for the SSRF holdback allocation of \$407,000 is earmarked for Emergency Shelter Overflow, and capital costs associated with the creation of the Low Barrier Shelter Day Program.

2. *Reaching Home (2019-2024)*

- 2020-21 Allocation \$219,153
- 2021-22 Allocation \$250,486
- 2020-21 Covid-19 Economic Response \$292,252
- 2020-21 Covid-19 Economic Response \$377,557

Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy (formerly Homelessness Partnering Strategy) is a community-based program aimed at reducing and preventing homelessness. Launched on April 1, 2019, it provides funding to urban, Indigenous, rural, and remote communities to help them address their local homelessness needs.

Through Reaching Home, the DNSSAB acts as the Community Entity (CE) to receive and disburse the program funding. The Community Advisory Board (CAB), known locally as the Nipissing District Housing and Homelessness Partnership (NDHHP), is made up of a wide range of community housing and homelessness agencies. The CAB is the local organizing committee responsible for setting the direction for addressing homelessness in the district. The CAB is also responsible to assess and recommend projects for funding to the CE (DNSSAB).

This funding is dedicated to the planning, development, and implementation of the coordinated access system HIFIS (Homeless Individuals and Families Information System), PiT (Point-in-Time) counts, Homelessness Enumeration, data collection, public reporting, education, training, and several other vital components.

Through the pandemic, the district received Reaching Home Covid-19 Emergency Response funding on two separate occasions. The initial allocation of (\$292,252) was dedicated to the LBS, while the second installment (\$377,577) went through an RFP process overseen by the CAB. Three community partners received funding that met the specified targets and guidelines of the program. These targets ensured the continuation of Homelessness Prevention programming; food security programs, cleaning measures and sufficient supplies of PPE were attainable.

Social Housing

- *2021-Provincial and Federal Funding Allocation \$3,191,830*

Social Housing is subsidized housing that is provided for low income individuals, families, or households. In Nipissing, DNSSAB oversees the management and administration of social housing and provides a subsidy to the 14 non-profit housing providers that make up the social housing portfolio. The subsidy for social housing is provided through the federal, provincial, and municipal governments. Depending on the specific social housing program, housing providers must offer either rent-geared-to-income, low-end market, or a mix of the two.

1. *Rent - Geared - to - Income* - Subsidized housing for low-income households, whereby rent is calculated at 30% of the household's income.
2. *Low-End Market* - Non-subsidized housing whereby social housing providers set a rent that is generally more reasonable than the private market and is considered at the Low-End of Market (LEM) rent.

Current Social Housing Programs

- Provincial Reformed (most common) – Mixed RGI and Low-End Market
 - *2020 Budget \$5,978,604*
 - *2021 Budget \$5,804,220*
- Municipal Non-Profit – Mixed RGI and Low-End Market
 - *2020 Budget \$1,233,456*
 - *2021 Budget \$316,600*
- Federal (or Private) Non-Profit – Low-End Market
 - *2020 Budget \$225,744*
 - *2021 Budget \$75,674*
- Urban Native – 100% RGI
 - *2020 Budget \$1,111,320*
 - *2021 Budget \$1,020,537*
- Northern Remote
 - *2020 Budget \$129,108*
 - *2021 Budget \$127,872*
- Public Housing (NDHC)
 - *2020 Budget \$3,305,537*
 - *2021 Budget \$3,023,897*

3. *Coordinated Access System (Centralized Waiting List)*

- The Coordinated Access System is a community-wide system that streamlines the process for people experiencing homelessness or in need of affordable accommodations to access housing and supports and is an essential step to a smarter, faster, more coordinated housing system.
- DNSSAB currently administers the Coordinated Access System for the District of Nipissing.
- In addition to regular housing applications the district currently offers two (2) waitlist priorities:

- i. *Special Priority (SPP)* – this status aims to help an applicant escape from human trafficking or separate permanently from someone who is abusing them by providing priority status on waiting lists.
- ii. *Urgent priority Status (UPS)* – this status aims to help an applicant whose home has been condemned by the municipality or fire department that results in the home being permanently lost to the market – or – has recently been destroyed by fire or natural disaster by providing priority status on waiting lists.

Affordable Housing Programs

Affordable Housing Programs offer a suite of components that aim to make rental housing and homeownership more affordable. Since 2004, the province has released five different variations of affordable housing programs, all comprising of similar program components. Below are the current affordable housing programs being administered under the DNSSAB portfolio:

1. *2016 Social Infrastructure Fund (2016-2019)- SIF*
 - o *2020-21 Budget \$223,689*
 - o *2021-22 Budget \$196,128*
2. *Investment in Affordable Housing for Ontario (2014 Extension) Program (2014-2020) – IAH-E*
 - o *2020-21 Budget \$222,777*
 - o *2021-22 Budget \$2,311,812 – (\$211,812 plus \$ 2,100,000)*

Although the Investment in Affordable Housing (IAH) and Social Infrastructure Fund (SIF) funding agreements have ended, the above mentioned funding will be utilized to complete any remaining Ontario Renovates, and capital projects under these programs. Additional funding in the amount of \$2,100,000 was secured and will be utilized for the 16-bed Transitional project (Gateway House).

3. *Canada-Ontario Community Housing Initiative (COCHI)*
 - o *2020-21 Budget \$68,267*
 - o *2021-22 Budget \$652,020*
4. *Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative (OPHI)*
 - o *2020-21 Budget \$1,003,868*
 - o *2020-21 Budget \$532,849*

The Canada-Ontario Community Housing Initiative (COCHI) and Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative (OPHI) are fully funded by the provincial and federal governments to address local housing priorities that include protecting social housing stock, affordability, repair, and new construction each having separate capital and operating components.

COCHI funding represents a re-investment of federal funding that has been declining under the Canada-Ontario Social Housing Agreement. As such, the DNSSAB is administering the following components:

- a) *New Build* – funding has been allocated to the Gateway House project under this Capital Component category.
- b) *Rent Supplement* – funding has been earmarked for a current Urban Native social housing provider with an upcoming end of operating agreement to promote housing stability for tenants who would otherwise face affordability challenges.
- c) *Transitional Operating Funding* – funding in this category has been earmarked as a transitional operating subsidy to the Gateway House project.

Under OPHI, the DNSSAB administers the Ontario Renovates Program, a program in high demand in the District. This program provides forgivable loans to renovate and/or rehabilitate affordable ownership and rental

properties. The main objectives of this program area is to preserve affordable homeownership and rental units through financial assistance to complete necessary repairs and renovations , as well as foster independent living of seniors and persons with disabilities by supporting modifications and renovations for accessibility.

The Homeownership Program is also successful in the District and also falls under the OPHI Capital Component. This program aims to assist moderate-income renter households to purchase affordable homes by providing down payment assistance in the form of a 20-year forgivable loan of up to 10% of the purchase price, based on the average resale price for the district. The main objectives of the program are to ease the demand for rental housing by assisting renter households to purchase affordable homes, and to encourage developers to build affordable housing by fostering demand.

Rent Subsidies and Benefits also fall under the Affordable Housing Portfolio. There are multiple rent subsidy programs that are provided to households from the Centralized Waiting List. These subsidies are not exclusively associated with units from the District's social housing providers, and can be offered for private market units. The five rental subsidy programs are Commercial Rent Supplement, Strong Communities Rent Supplement, Portable Housing Benefit, Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit (COHB) and Housing Allowance. The vast majority of the subsidy provided to these programs is geared to households renting private market units.

- 5. Commercial Rent Supplement (Municipal and Federal)**
 - a) 2021-22 Provincial Funding Allocation \$96,874
 - b) 2020-21 Budget \$440,244
 - c) 2021-22 Budget \$537,540
 - d) 76 - the average number of recipients in 2020

This rent subsidy program provides RGI assistance within private market units. The DNSSAB and landlord(s) enter into an agreement in order for their unit(s) to be a part of the program. The DNSSAB typically pays a portion of the rent to the landlord directly on a monthly basis and the tenant then pays their portion of RGI. Units are filled by applicants from the Centralized Waiting List, and these subsidies count toward the district's Service Level Standards

- 6. Strong Communities Rent Supplement Program**
 - a) 2020-21 Budget \$344,612.43
 - b) 2021-22 Budget \$344,612.43
 - c) 45 - the average number of recipients in 2020

The Strong Communities Rent Supplement Program is fully funded by the Provincial government, and provides RGI assistance within private market units and is divided into three streams: Regular, Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC), and the Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS).

Under the MOHLTC and MCSS streams, DNSSAB works with community agencies (referral agencies) that are responsible for tenant selection, placement, tenant issues and liaising with landlords. Under the Regular stream, the process is identical to Commercial Rent Supplement. Only households assisted through the Regular stream count towards the district's Service Level Standards.

This program is expected to run until March 31st, 2024.

- 7. DNSSAB Portable Housing Benefit (PHB)**
 - a) 2020-21 Budget \$ 30,000
 - b) 2021-22 Budget \$60,000
 - c) 10 - the average number of recipients in 2020

The DNSSAB PHB program provides monthly subsidies directly to households on the Centralized Waiting List. This benefit is portable, anywhere in the district, and is not tied to a specific unit. The benefit amount is

calculated based on the Average Market Rent and the household income. Acceptance of this benefit removes households from the Centralized Waiting List and therefore counts towards the Service Level Standards.

8. Canada Ontario Housing Benefit (COHB)

- a) 2020-21 Planning Allocation \$195,475
- b) 2021-22 Planning Allocation \$ 256,130
- c) 63 - the average number of recipients in 2020

This program is fully funded by the Federal and Provincial governments, and is administered through the Ministry of Finance once the DNSSAB forwards applications. The monthly subsidy is provided directly to the household - modeled off the previous provincial Portable Housing Benefit – Special Priority Policy where no involvement with the landlord is required. This benefit is portable throughout the province, and not tied to a specific unit. The benefit amount is calculated based on the Average Market Rent and household income. Acceptance of this benefit removes the applicant from the Centralized Waiting List as the applicant is then in receipt of a housing subsidy. However, these households are not counted toward the district's Service Level Standards

9. Housing Allowance

- a) 73 - the average number of recipients in 2020

The housing allowance budget is comprised of funding from the following:

- *Investment in Affordable Housing for Ontario (2014 Extension) Program (2014-2020) – IAH-E*
- *2016 Social Infrastructure Fund (2016-2019)- SIF*
- *Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative (OPHI)*

This subsidy is available to current applicants awaiting RGI housing on the Centralized Waiting List. The maximum Housing Allowance subsidy is \$250/month per household. The subsidy is designed to address affordability for households waiting for an RGI unit, and is offered chronological to those on the Centralized Waiting List.

CONCLUSION:

Through collaboration and consultation not only within the department, but with community partners and the ministry at large, Housing Programs support households across the housing spectrum. Although the pandemic has brought to light the gaps within the housing continuum, it has also financially encouraged that these gaps be addressed.

The housing programs department, through support from all levels of government, has been able to provide vulnerable residents with flexible, safe, supported and secure options, addressing the local needs and priorities within the district.

The demand for affordable housing within the District has and will continue to be a top priority. The DNSSAB will continue to facilitate, support and maintain the integrity of the community housing system through financial programs, assistance and support to community partners and residents.

The DNSSAB will continue to seek and explore options for a holistic model related to homelessness, mental health and addiction services that will allow individuals to receive the supports they require to successfully transition to independent living.



BRIEFING NOTE SSE01-21

For Information or For Approval

Date: January 27, 2021

Topic: Provincial Poverty Reduction Strategy

Prepared by: Michelle Glabb, Director of Social Services and Employment

Reviewed by: Catherine Matheson, Chief Administrative Officer

Briefing Note SSE01-21 provides an overview of the Provincial Poverty Reduction Strategy entitled *Building a Strong Foundation for Success: Reducing Poverty in Ontario (2020-2025)* for information purposes.

BACKGROUND:

The Poverty Reduction Act, 2009 requires “the Government of Ontario to maintain the poverty reduction strategy set out in *Breaking the Cycle - Ontario's Poverty Reduction Strategy*, published on December 4, 2008, or another long-term poverty reduction strategy that reflects Ontario’s aspiration to be a leading jurisdiction in reducing poverty; and that is guided by the vision of a province where every person has the opportunity to achieve his or her full potential and contribute to and participate in a prosperous and healthy Ontario.”¹

On December 16th, 2019, the Province of Ontario launched an online consultation process that ended on April 30th, 2020 to obtain input from the public and stakeholders to inform the development of a new poverty reduction strategy. On December 16th, 2020, Todd Smith the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services announced the release of the Province’s five year poverty reduction strategy entitled *Building a Strong Foundation for Success: Reducing Poverty in Ontario (2020-2025)*.²

Key Principles

To help guide the implementation of the Strategy, the Province identified the following five key principles:³

1. Person-centered: help individuals overcome barriers;

¹ Legislative Assembly of Ontario, <https://www.ola.org/en/legislative-business/bills/parliament-39/session-1/bill-152>

² Province of Ontario, <https://www.ontario.ca/page/building-strong-foundation-success-reducing-poverty-ontario-2020-2025>

³ Province of Ontario, <https://www.ontario.ca/page/building-strong-foundation-success-reducing-poverty-ontario-2020-2025>

2. Outcomes-focused: measure and report on progress and focus investments on achieving outcomes;
3. Partnership-driven: work collaboratively and share responsibility;
4. Integrated: take a whole of government and cross-sectoral approach to create a better coordinated and digitally enabled service system;
5. Place-based: focus on locally designed and community-led solutions.

Vision



“An Ontario where everyone can participate in their communities and achieve greater independence, stability and, wherever possible, long-term job success to support themselves and their families.”

Target

The Poverty Reduction Act 2009, at a minimum every five years, requires the Government of Ontario to establish a specific target for poverty reduction. For the 2020-2025 Strategy, the following target was identified:⁴



“Get more social assistance recipients to move into meaningful employment and financial stability. The Government will provide the right support and services with the goal of increasing the number of social assistance recipients moving to employment each year from 35,000 in 2019 to 60,000 by 2024.”⁵

Framework for Action

The Province’s framework for action is built upon four pillars. Figure 1 below captures these pillars along with the key initiatives associated with each priority area.

Figure 1

1 Encouraging Job Creation	2 Connecting People with the Right Supports and Services	3 Making Life More Affordable and Building Financial Resiliency	4 Accelerating Action and Driving Progress
<p>Key Initiatives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment Services Transformation • Micro-Credentials Skilled Trades Strategy • Women’s Economic Security Program • Graduation Coach Programs 	<p>Key Initiatives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Roadmap to Wellness • Social Assistance Recovery and Renewal Plan • Community Housing Renewal Strategy • Strategy to Re-Design Child Welfare • Creating Childcare Spaces 	<p>Key Initiatives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ontario Child Benefit • Low Income Individuals/ Families Tax Credit • Ontario Child Care Access Relief and Expenses Tax Credit • Energy Affordability Program • Protections for Pay day Loans Borrowers 	<p>Key Initiatives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leverage partnerships with the Private Sector. • Black Youth Action Plan • Digital and Data Strategy • Broadband and Cellular Action Plan • Ontario Onwards Action Plan

As you can see from Figure 1, several common themes such as the employment services transformation, social assistance reform, access to training, affordable

⁴ Legislative Assembly of Ontario, <https://www.ola.org/en/legislative-business/bills/parliament-39/session-1/bill-152>,

⁵ Province of Ontario, <https://www.ontario.ca/page/building-strong-foundation-success-reducing-poverty-ontario-2020-2025>

housing, childcare and a roadmap to wellness which refers to “building a connected mental healthcare system to improve the patient and caregiver experience and strengthen local services to make it easier for people to navigate the system”⁶ have all emerged as key initiatives under the four pillars. Many of these initiatives are already well underway with others being longer term initiatives that will require more time to implement. While not a pillar itself, the Province has also included key initiatives related to achieving Indigenous prosperity and well-being along with recognition, that due to long-standing systemic barriers and racism, poverty is experienced differently among various priority groups such as youth, women, Black and other racialized communities.⁷

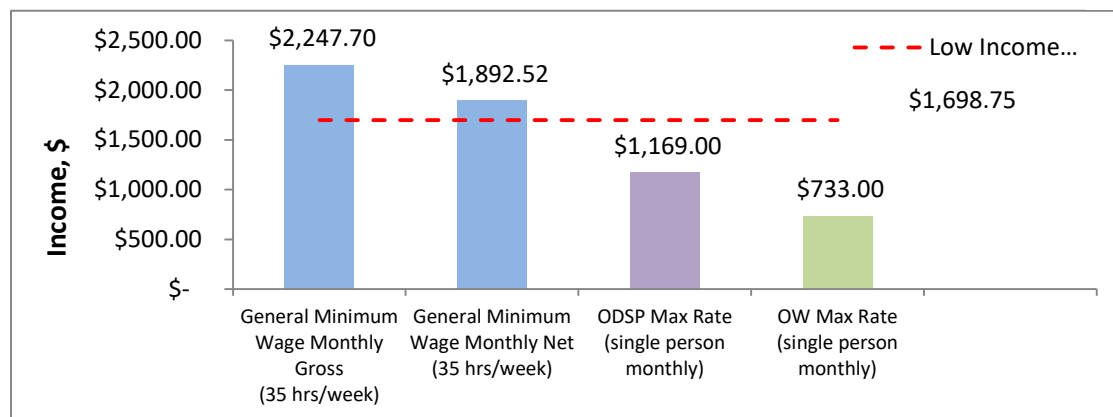
How is Poverty Measured?

Currently, in Canada, the official measure of poverty used to establish the poverty line is the Market Basket Measure (MBM). “The MBM is calculated based on the costs of a basket of goods and services that individuals and families require to meet their basic needs and achieve a modest standard of living. This basket includes items such as healthy food, appropriate shelter and home maintenance, and clothing and transportation, as well as other goods and services that permit engagement in the community.”⁸ There are varying opinions on which low income threshold should be used to establish the poverty line. For the purpose of this report, only the MBM will be reviewed.

REPORT:

Figure 2 below illustrates how the MBM threshold for a single person compares to the monthly income received under the Ontario Works Program, the Ontario Disability Support Program and a full time minimum wage earner working thirty five (35) hours per week.

Figure 2



As you can see, social assistance income falls significantly below the poverty line with a single person in receipt of Ontario Works only receiving 43% of the MBM. While

⁶ Province of Ontario, <https://www.ontario.ca/page/building-strong-foundation-success-reducing-poverty-ontario-2020-2025>

⁷ Province of Ontario, <https://www.ontario.ca/page/building-strong-foundation-success-reducing-poverty-ontario-2020-2025>

⁸ Andrew Heisz, Statistics Canada, Understanding Canada’s New Poverty Line: The Market Basket Measure, <https://communitydata.ca/sites/default/files/Understanding-MBM-STC-Feb12.pdf>

minimum wage earners appear to be faring much better in comparison, this perceived advantage can be diminished depending upon the circumstances of the individual. As social assistance recipients have access to additional benefits that cover expenses such as dental, vision and prescription drug costs, this has to be taken into consideration when comparing the income of minimum wage earners to this population.

While this report does not provide a comprehensive comparison of the MBM in relation to the income of all family types, it is important to note that the increases in both provincial and federal child benefits has reduced the depth of the poverty gap for families with children. In fact, in a report entitled *The Cost of Poverty in Ontario*, Feed Ontario states that “while the poverty rate has decreased, the gains have not been equal across all demographics. Families with children (two-parent and single parent families) are faring better, but families without children (single people and couples without children) are experiencing more and deeper poverty.”⁹ Figure 3 below illustrates this through food bank usage by family type comparing 2007 with 2019 data. As you can see, based on this comparison, the usage category of “single people” has significantly increased while the remaining categories have all decreased.¹⁰

Figure 3

The change in food bank demographics reflects this trend.

In particular, the proportion of single person households accessing food banks has grown by

45%

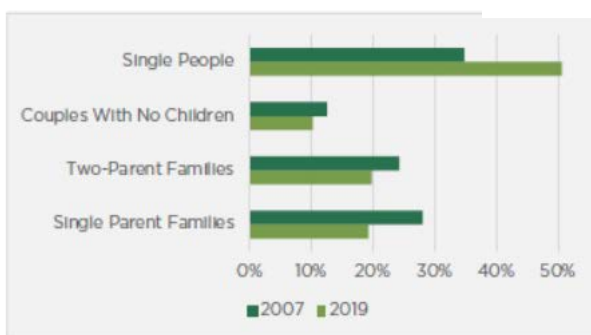


FIGURE 1.5 HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION, FOOD BANKS IN ONTARIO, 2007 VS 2019⁶

Association of Municipalities Ontario (AMO)

In AMO’s submission to the Province during the consultation period, the following was stated “the presence of poverty in our local communities continues to hinder socio-economic opportunities for individuals, negatively impact our local economies, exacerbate health outcomes and weaken the ability to live in a fair and inclusive society. In short, there is a cost to inaction. There are several dimensions to poverty including education, food security, employment opportunities, child care, housing affordability and many others”.¹¹ The cost of poverty in Ontario is estimated to be approximately \$27.1 to \$33 billion annually. These costs have been broken down in Table 1 below:

⁹ Celia R. Lee, Alexa Briggs, *The Cost of Poverty In Ontario*, October 2019, <https://feedontario.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Feed-Ontario-Cost-of-Poverty-2019.pdf>

¹⁰ Celia R. Lee, Alexa Briggs, *The Cost of Poverty In Ontario*, October 2019, <https://feedontario.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Feed-Ontario-Cost-of-Poverty-2019.pdf>

¹¹ Association of Municipalities Ontario, May 8, 2020, <https://www.amo.on.ca/AMO-PDFs/Reports/2020/AMO-Response-to-MCCSS-Poverty-Reduction-Strategy-C.aspx>

INDICATOR	COST
1. Health	\$3.9 billion
2. Crime	\$1.1 billion
3. Opportunity: Taxes Forgone	\$2.7 – \$3 billion
4. Opportunity: Lost Income	\$19.4 – \$25 billion
Total Cost of Poverty in Ontario	\$27.1 – \$33 billion

Table 1

As you can see in Table 1, poverty has a cost that goes beyond social assistance benefits and the administration of social programs. Tax revenue lost due to unemployment or underemployment results in a significant loss to the province. This may explain why connecting more social assistance recipients to employment has been targeted by the Province and is a key initiative under Pillar One - Encouraging Job Creation of the Strategy. AMO’s submission further states that “poverty reduction initiatives are beyond the magnitude of just any one government. There is a need for an overarching and robust provincial and federal strategy paired with local strategies that will complement each other with various poverty reduction actions that are based on appropriate roles and responsibilities”.¹²

COVID-19

Due to the unprecedented government spending and devastating impact that COVID-19 has had on the economy, implementing any poverty reduction strategy in the midst of this crisis is extremely challenging. In fact, in AMO’s submission to the Province they state how the pandemic will “further exacerbate the current economic and social status of low-income individuals and families across Ontario. This pandemic threatens to displace more individuals and families into the harsh cycle of poverty that will prove even more difficult to escape if targeted investments and systems improvements are not made by the Province in crucial human service areas”.¹³

CONCLUSION:

Poverty is a complex problem that requires coordination and inter-ministerial collaboration between all levels of government. As illustrated in this report, social assistance recipients live on income that falls well below the poverty line, yet according to recent data, in the Province of Ontario 88% of Ontario Works recipients rent from the private market¹⁴. This means that social assistance recipients are using their food money to pay the rent. This is only one example that illustrates the need for systemic changes and policy interventions to connect the poorest and most vulnerable in our

¹² Association of Municipalities Ontario, May 8, 2020, <https://www.amo.on.ca/AMO-PDFs/Reports/2020/AMO-Response-to-MCCSS-Poverty-Reduction-Strategy-C.aspx>

¹³ Association of Municipalities Ontario, May 8, 2020, <https://www.amo.on.ca/AMO-PDFs/Reports/2020/AMO-Response-to-MCCSS-Poverty-Reduction-Strategy-C.aspx>

¹⁴ Ontario, Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services, OW Caseload at a Glance, updated November 4th, 2020, <https://www.sa.mcscs.gov.on.ca/program-areas/program-integrity/sams-transition-performance-reports/>

communities with the supports and services they require. Poverty cannot be eradicated through Band-Aid solutions. Root causes of poverty must be addressed and the need for prevention must be embedded within any systemic improvement in order to achieve long-term sustainable results.