



COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING AGENDA

Healthy Communities without Poverty

Date: Wednesday, October 28, 2020

Time: 12:00 PM

Location: By video conference while pandemic protocols are in place

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/92660019819?pwd=UHFQb1pYdkpHUnVJd2tMQXNzL3Vodz09>

Meeting ID: **926 6001 9819**

Passcode: **361720**

One tap mobile

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Dial by your location

+1 647 374 4685 Toronto

+1 647 558 0588 Toronto

Meeting ID: **926 6001 9819**

Passcode: **361720**

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

Item	Topic
2.0	Opening remarks by the Chair
3.0	Approval of the Agenda for October 28, 2020 <u>MOTION #CSC05-2020</u> THAT the Community Services Committee accepts the Agenda as presented.
4.0	DELEGATIONS (3) 4.1 PiT Count Results – Stacey Cyopeck -Attached report HS36-20 outlines the findings from the 2020 Everyone Counts-Nipissing District homelessness enumeration project, and is for information purposes. 4.2 Mary’s and Josh’s Story – Michelle Glabb and Stacey Cyopeck 4.3 Stat Roll Up By Department – Dave Plumstead and Program Directors
5.0	CONSENT AGENDA - Reports for Information Only – <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> <u>MOTION #CSC06-2020</u> That the Committee receives for information purposes Consent Agenda items 5.1 to 5.5. 5.1 SSE07-20 Social Assistance Modernization - an update on the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services Modernization Strategy. 5.2 SSE08-20 Economic Impact of COVID-19 - an overview of the impact COVID-19 has had on the economy, local labour market and on the Ontario Works caseload. 5.3 HS29-20 Role of Community Advisory Board - the role of the Nipissing District Housing and Homelessness Partnership (NDHHP), known as the Community Advisory Board (CAB). 5.4 HS35-20 Mental Health and Addictions Funding - outlines the recent announcement from the Province regarding funding for critical mental health and addictions supports during COVID-19. 5.5 HS33-20 Reaching Home Funding Announcement - details of the Reaching Home – Additional COVID-19 Funding announcement.
6.0	MANAGERS REPORTS

Item	Topic
	<p>6.1 Move in Camera</p> <p><u>MOTION #CSC07-2020</u> That the Committee moves in camera at _____ to receive information about a labour relations matter.</p>
	<p>6.2 Adjourn in Camera</p> <p><u>MOTION #CSC08-2020</u> That the Committee adjourns in camera at _____.</p>
	<p>6.3 Approve In Camera</p> <p><u>MOTION #CSC09-2020</u> That the Committee accepts the direction/action agreed to in camera.</p>
7.0	OTHER BUSINESS/CORRESPONDENCE
8.0	<p>NEXT MEETING DATE Wednesday, November 25 (Finance and Administration), 2020 at 12:00 PM</p>
9.0	<p>ADJOURNMENT</p> <p><u>MOTION #CSC10-2020</u> <i>Resolved</i> THAT the Community Services Committee meeting be adjourned at p.m.</p>

BRIEFING NOTE HS36-20

For information or For Approval

Date: October 28, 2020

Purpose: 2020 Everyone Counts-Nipissing District: Findings

Prepared by: Stacey Cyopeck, Manager, Housing Programs

Reviewed by: Catherine Matheson, Chief Executive Officer

INFORMATION:

This report outlines the findings from the 2020 Everyone Counts-Nipissing District homelessness enumeration project, and is for information purposes.

BACKGROUND:

- Beginning Wednesday March 11th at 8:00 am the DNSSAB oversaw a 24-hour enumeration of homelessness in Nipissing District.
- This initiative included a Point-in-Time Count that was funded by the Government of Canada's Reaching Home Strategy.
- Enumeration activities took place within the municipalities of North Bay, Mattawa, and West Nipissing.
- The objective of the Everyone Counts- Nipissing District initiative was to gather demographic, numerical, and community need information on the District's homeless population in order to more accurately understand the issues facing homeless individuals in the District.
- The results gathered will assist the DNSSAB, local municipalities, local service providers as well as Provincial and Federal levels of government with:
 - Identifying the demographics and needs of the local homeless population;
 - Enhanced system planning and program development;
 - Measuring progress towards ending homelessness;
 - Increasing public awareness about homelessness;
 - Testing the efficiency of programs and interventions aimed at ending homelessness.

REPORT OF FINDINGS:

- An infographic which summarizes the key findings can be found in 'Attachment A'.
- Over a period of 24-hours, there were a total of 293 individuals counted/surveyed as being homeless, representing a 61% increase from 2018. This number includes the following homelessness categories:
 - 72 people Emergency/VAW sheltered (administrative count).
 - 10 people transitionally housed (administrative count).
 - 91 people counted as homeless in public institutions with no fixed address.
 - 68 people surveyed as hidden homeless (i.e. couch surfing)
 - 7 people surveyed as unsheltered (public space, vehicle, abandoned building, etc.).
 - 12 people surveyed as unsure of where they are staying but with no fixed address.

- 33 dependent children counted or surveyed as homeless by their parent/guardian.
- The demographic background of survey participants included:
 - 67% of those surveyed identified as male and 32% identified as female
 - 42% of participants identified as Indigenous
 - 59% experienced their first time homeless before the age of 25.
 - 27% identified as being in the child welfare system (foster care, adoption, group home etc.)
 - 83% of participants were single adults
 - 70% had a source of income that was social assistance (OW/ODSP)
- Survey participants also responded to questions that identified their community need:
 - 50% of participants were chronically homeless (6 months or more of homelessness in the past year)
 - In the past 12 months survey participants identified as having:
 - 117 visits to the Emergency Room
 - 37 hospitalizations, experienced by 22% of survey participants
 - 1,396 interactions with police, experienced by 56% of survey participants
 - 11,305 days spent incarcerated, 39% of participants had spent 1+ days in jail/prison.
 - Top three reasons for housing loss:
 - Addiction/substance use (21%)
 - Incarceration (19%)
 - Conflict with spouse/partner (16%)
 - Top three barriers to finding housing
 - Low income (57%)
 - Discrimination and stigma (56%)
 - Addiction/substance use (52%)
 - 57% of participants identified as having mental health challenges
 - 74% of participants identified as having substance abuse challenges.

RESOURCES REQUIRED:

- The methodology used to enumerate homelessness followed the guidelines set out in the 2020 Point-in-Time Count Toolkit.
- An Everyone Counts Committee was formed in December 2019, which included representatives from seven local organizations who are members of the NDHHP (CAB).
- 109 surveyor volunteers from agencies across the District were trained and assisted with administering the Everyone Counts survey. The Everyone Counts project would not have been possible without the hard work and dedication of the 109 surveyor volunteers.
- During the 24-hour Point in Time count, Everyone Counts surveys were conducted at approximately 37 locations across North Bay, Mattawa, and West Nipissing.

RISK IDENTIFICATION AND MITIGATION:

- During the data analysis stage of the project, DNSSAB staff conducted an in-depth de-duplication process to ensure that the survey responses of individuals who conducted the survey more than once were removed.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN/ COMMUNICATION PLAN:

- Simultaneously with the presentation of Everyone Counts findings to the Board, Housing Programs staff will forward the infographic findings document to Nipissing District Housing and Homelessness Partnership (NDHHP) organizations. These organizations played an integral part in planning for this project, providing insight, and surveying participants during the day of the project. The comprehensive findings report will also be shared with the Board and NDHHP members.

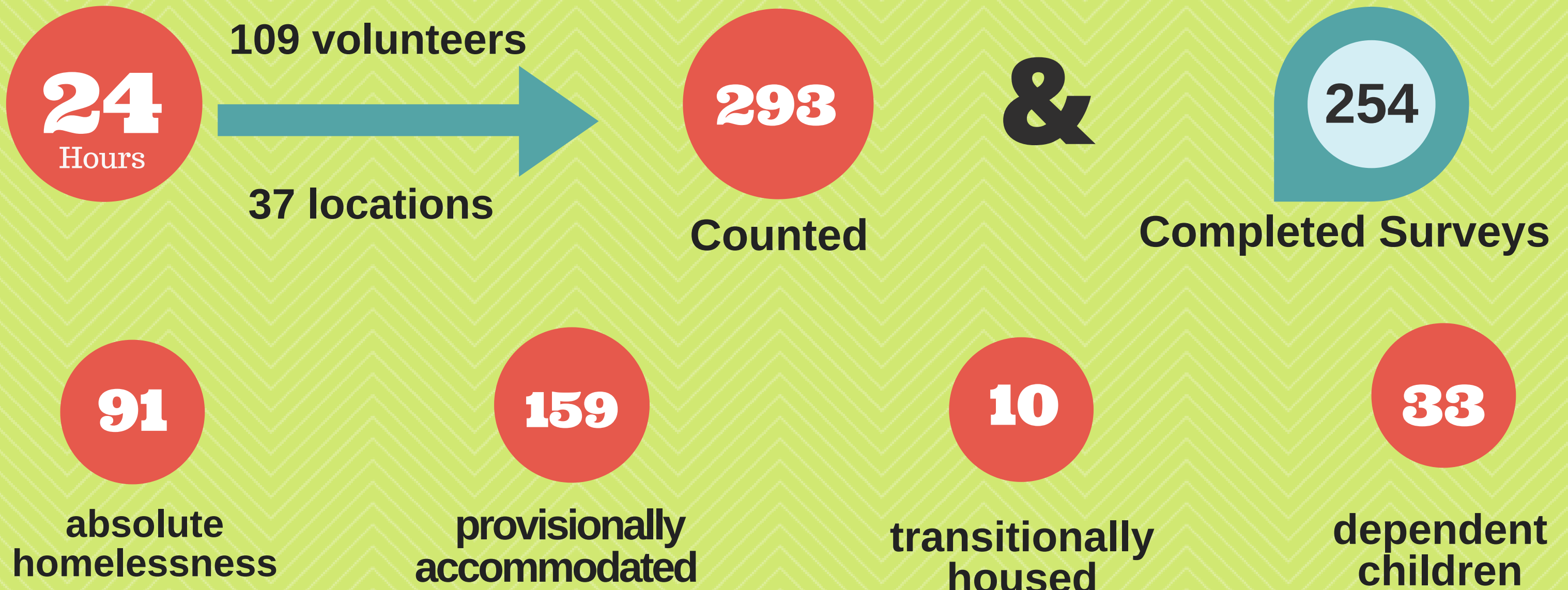
- A PiT Count final report is due to the Government of Canada and will be sent to the department of Employment and Social Development Canada on or before October 31st.
- Finally, an important part of the communication plan of the Everyone Counts project is to communicate the results back to the Nipissing District community through a media release to local media outlets.

2020

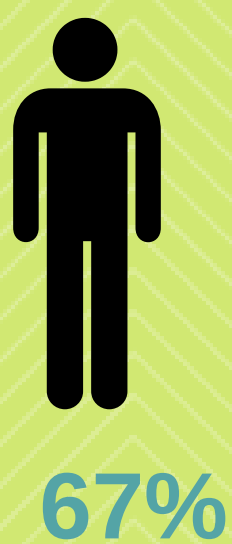
Everyone Counts- Nipissing District



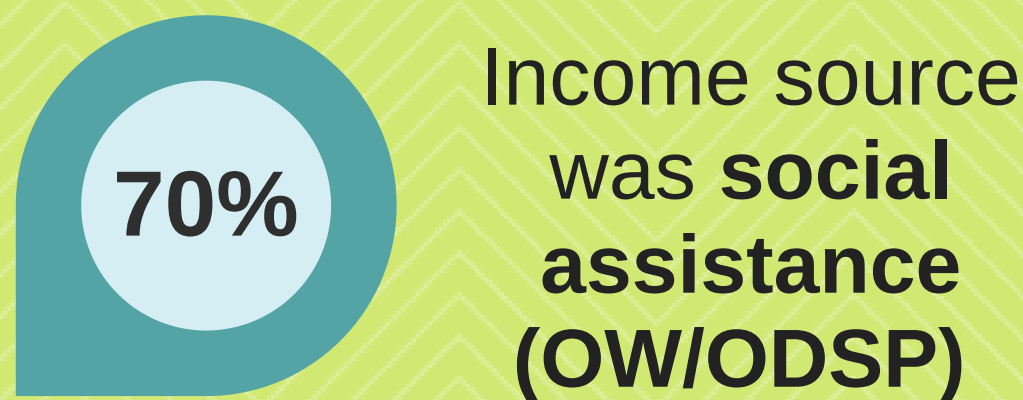
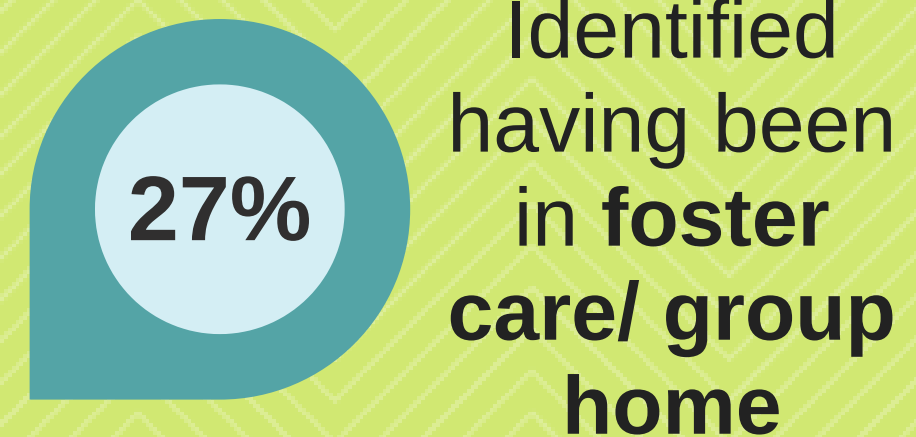
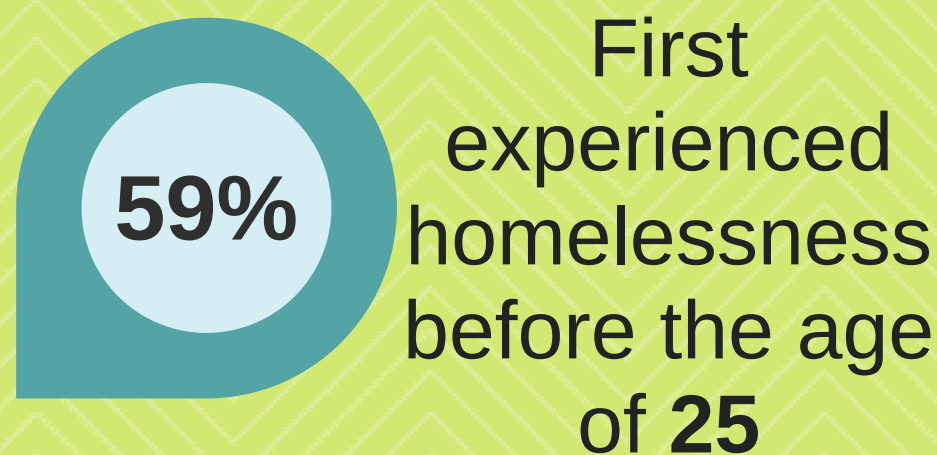
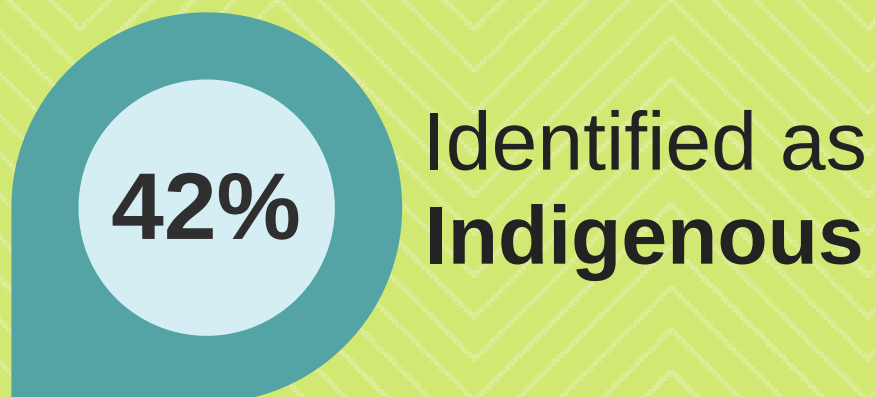
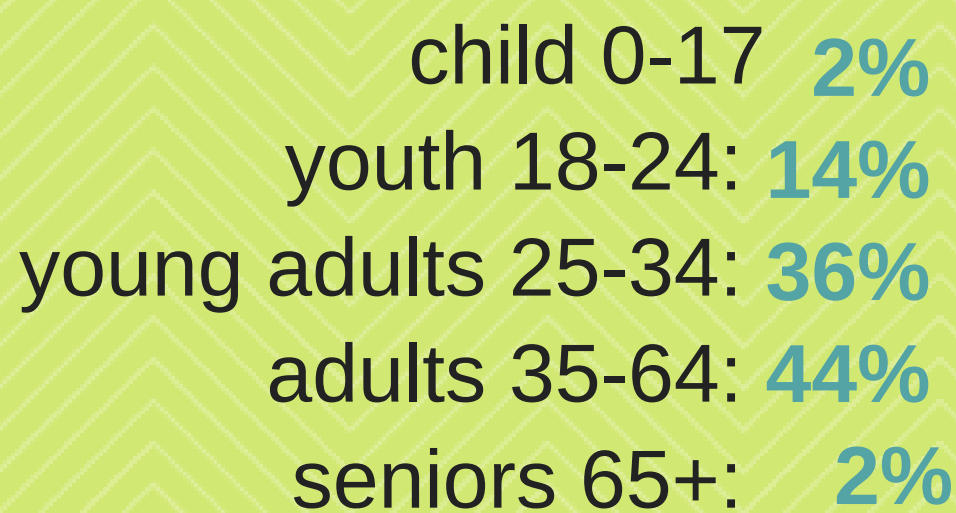
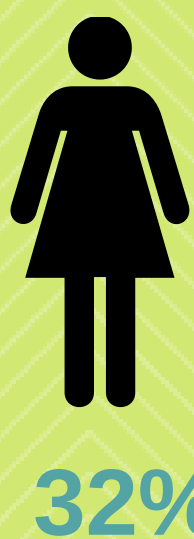
On Wednesday March 11th at 8:00 am to Thursday March 12th at 8:00 am, a Count and Survey of homelessness was conducted in: North Bay, Mattawa, and West Nipissing.



Survey Demographics



gender



community needs

chronically homeless



for six months or more in the past year

episodically homeless



for three or more times in the past year

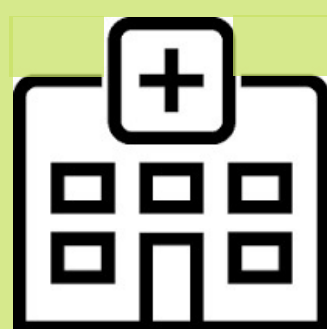
public system use In the past 12 months...



117 visits to the E.R.

= \$ 72,306

Average cost based on: www.qch.on.ca
Hospital Fees for Patients
without Canadian Provincial or Federal Health
Insurance



22% had been hospitalized

37 times hospitalized

= \$ 2,579,456

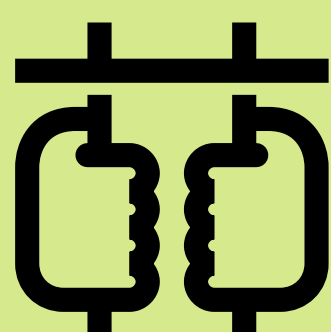
Average cost based on: www.qch.on.ca
Hospital Fees for Patients
without Canadian Provincial or Federal Health
Insurance

916 days hospitalized



56% had interactions with police

1396 interactions



39% spent 1+ day in jail/prison

11,305 days spent incarcerated

= \$ 1,606,101

Average cost based on: Gaetz, Stephen
(2012),
The Real Cost of Homelessness

Total \$ 4,257,863

top 3 reasons for housing loss

- Addiction/ substance use * - 21%
- Incarceration - 19%
- Conflict with Spouse/Partner- 16%

* Based on single response

top 3 barriers to finding housing **

- Low income - 57%
- Discrimination & Stigma - 56%
- Addiction/Substance use - 52 %

** Based on multiple responses





BRIEFING NOTE SSE07-20

For Information or For Approval

Date: October 28, 2020

Purpose: **Social Assistance Modernization Update**

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

Reviewed by: Catherine Matheson, Chief Administrative Officer

FOR INFORMATION:

Briefing Note SSE07-20 provides an update on the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services Modernization Strategy for information purposes.

BACKGROUND:

The Ontario Works program is heavily weighted by administrative inefficiencies that come with a significant cost and reduce productivity and outcomes. In an effort to change this, over the past several years the Ministry has been on a journey to modernize and transform the delivery of social assistance in Ontario. Through a phased in approach utilizing prototype regions to test changes before they are implemented province wide, much has been achieved.

On September 30, 2020 the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) issued a news release entitled "Ontario Modernizes Social Assistance to Help More People Re-Enter the Workforce".¹ In this release the following priorities are identified with respect to MCCSS's plans to reform the delivery of social assistance:

1. Enhanced Access to Employment and Training: Working with the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development to improve access to employment and training services to drive the best outcomes for social assistance clients, including people with disabilities who have been particularly hard hit by job losses during the COVID-19 outbreak;
2. Accelerating Digital Delivery: Accessing supports will be easier with new digital tools and modern service options such as an online application, expansion of the MyBenefits digital platform to improve access for people receiving social

¹ Ontario Newsroom, ONTARIO MODERNIZES SOCIAL ASSISTANCE TO HELP MORE PEOPLE RE-ENTER THE WORKFORCE, September 30, 2020, <https://news.ontario.ca/en/release/58607/ontario-modernizes-social-assistance-to-help-more-people-re-enter-the-workforce>

assistance, and new communications channels to allow two-way digital messaging between clients and caseworkers;

3. Centralized and Automated Delivery: Figure 1 below illustrates the components associated with a centralized intake process. The intent of this change is to reduce paperwork and provide staff more time to do the transformational work that is required to support clients through crisis and help them get back to work.

Components of Centralized and Automated Intake Figure 1

Social Assistance Digital Application (SADA)	Risk-Based Eligibility Determination (RBED)	Provincial Central Intake Unit
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Ontarians will apply for Ontario Works through the new, user-friendly online Social Assistance Digital Application (SADA) Applications received through SADA will be redirected to the central intake or municipalities (if not in the prototype launch) SADA will enable online identity verification (eID) and consent Municipalities will continue to process in-person and phone applications, or applications through Online Application for Social Assistance (OASA). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For prototype municipalities, applications received through SADA will go through a risk-based eligibility determination (RBED) framework. RBED is being built in partnership with Equifax and will validate the applicant's eligibility. RBED will give each application a risk level based on eligibility*: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No risk, low risk and medium risk will be auto-granted. High risk cases will require caseworker intervention. RBED will be released iteratively. Some complex cases (e.g. trustees, applicants under 18) will not go through RBED for launch. <p><small>*Risk levels do not reflect case management needs</small></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Provincial central unit will manage applications that come through SADA and RBED. For municipalities in the prototype, the Province will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review applications, resolve duplicates and merge applications in SAMS Fill missing data fields for in-scope applications if required Redirect cases that are not eligible for central intake and RBED to municipalities Assess and grant new applications Assess and assist with granting reapplications and applicants "known to SAMS" Redirect cases that are high risk to municipalities for a decision

4. Risk-based Eligibility Reviews: Automated, smarter eligibility verification with provincial, federal and third-party sources to make financial assistance processing faster, while strengthening program integrity; and
5. Collaborating with Partners: By co-designing a new provincial-municipal transformation vision with municipal Ontario Works delivery partners; working with First Nations partners to develop a social assistance recovery and renewal plan that responds to unique First Nations priorities and circumstances; and engaging with key stakeholders, including staff, provincial bargaining agents, clients and health care providers.

In addition to the strategies highlighted above from the news release, the following represents some of the other modernization initiatives that are awaiting implementation in the District of Nipissing.

Electronic Signature Pilot



The mandated requirement for wet signatures was suspended by the Ministry at the onset of the pandemic. As an alternate solution did not exist within MCCSS, this quickly became a component of their modernization strategy. MCCSS has been exploring opportunities to prototype an enterprise electronic signature solution. In a presentation delivered to Administrators, MCCSS stated that this solution would support the required COVID-19 related renewal and recovery work and achieve the following²:

² Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services, ELECTRONIC SIGNATURE REVIEW OF CORE SIGNATURE INTEGRATION OPPORTUNITIES, September 20, 2020.

- Staff and third parties would be able to sign, authorize and verify documents in a fast, secure, compliant and accessible format;
- E-signatures will expedite service delivery timelines and provide greater access to service;
- A reduction in the need for in-person visits.

Like the Centralized and Automated Intake described above, MCCSS has selected prototype regions to pilot electronic signatures to ensure that it is effective prior to launching this solution provide wide.

Reloadable Payment Card



The Reloadable Payment Card (RPC) is a secure electronic method of payment for social assistance recipients provided by the Royal Bank of Canada (RBC). No bank account is required to participate in this initiative. The RPC works similar to a debit card. Clients can withdraw funds from an automated teller machine (ATM), use the card to make point of sale purchases as well as make online purchases anywhere Visa is accepted. RPC looks like an RBC Visa credit card as illustrated in the graphic on the left, does not identify the cardholder as a social assistance recipient and to ensure client privacy, does not monitor transactions.

In a news release entitled Ontario Introduces Reloadable Payment Card for Social Assistance the following benefits of reloadable payment cards are listed: ³

- Not having to use expensive cheque-cashing services and avoiding the risk of carrying large amounts of cash;
- Four no-fee ATM withdrawals per month and unlimited in-store or online payments and purchases;
- Enhanced security with PIN and chip technology.

The other benefits associated with the RPC are:

- The Social Assistance Service Modernization Branch (SASMB) documents indicate that transitioning from paper cheques to direct bank deposit or RPC will reduce costs⁴;
- Eliminates the stigma associated with OW cheques as cardholders are not identified as social assistance recipients;
- Reduces the risk of losing paper cheques;
- Reduces wait times and travel costs to visit local offices to pick up cheques for individuals without addresses;
- Cards are portable across municipalities and can be transferred between social assistance programs to maintain the method of payment;

³ Ontario Newsroom, ONTARIO INTRODUCES RELOADABLE PAYMENT CARD FOR SOCIAL ASSISTANCE, May 16, 2020, <https://news.ontario.ca/en/release/38841/ontario-introduces-reloadable-payment-card-for-social-assistance>

⁴ Social Assistance Service Modernization Branch, SOCIAL ASSISTANCE - RELOADABLE PAYMENT CARD PROGRAM EXPANSION. PowerPoint Presentation, November 2018.

- Automates business processes and reduces administrative costs associated to generating, sorting, mailing, distributing and reconciling cheques;
- Reduces the risk of fraud associated with forged, replicated, double cashed and stolen cheques;
- Additional safeguard to minimize disruption and financial hardship for recipients during postal strikes.

Electronic Document Management



The purpose of Electronic Document Management (EDM) is to make digital copies of paper-based documents available through SAMS as well as to provide the foundation required to enhance other digital services. Due to the cost involved in digitizing records, most offices are only converting active files. Inactive hard copy files will continue to be stored in accordance with MCCSS records management and file retention standards.

The EDM model provides the following features:

- The digitization of incoming documents and the master file through a third party vendor;
- A digital mailroom to retrieve and process incoming documents;
- Electronic access to the master file through SAMS;
- The ability to upload documents from MyBenefits; and
- The ability to upload digital documents directly through SAMS.

The following represents a few of the other benefits associated with EDM:⁵

- Paper is digitized, securely stored, and retrievable in SAMS in **real-time**;
- EDM provides quick access to case information, allowing for **improved client service**;
- Improved records management, destroying hard copy materials and legally retaining in a digital format to **securely retain recipient's information**;
- Reduces administrative burden and enables work from home opportunities.

CURRENT STATUS/STEPS TAKEN TO DATE:

To date, the following Ontario Works modernization initiatives are underway to ensure that Nipissing keeps pace with the Ministry's plan to modernize social assistance delivery:

- Interest was expressed at the recent Association for Municipalities Ontario conference to become a pilot site for the testing phase for the **Electronic Signature Pilot** described above. Unfortunately, Nipissing was not selected to be part of the first cohort. Continued interest will be communicated to the Ministry for future cohorts.
- A **Reloadable Payment Card Implementation Team** comprised of staff from both the Ontario Works program and corporate services has been established

⁵ Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services, SOCIAL ASSISTANCE MODERNIZATION OVERVIEW, PowerPoint Presentation, June 22, 2020.

and are in the process of entering into a RPC Agreement and opening an account with RBC. Once these tasks are complete, the onboarding process with the Ministry can commence which will enable the RPC payment method in the SAMS. A local policy and process is being developed to support the implementation of the RPC. Due to a Ministry “blackout” period that is needed to upgrade the platform that supports the RPC, onboarding prior to year-end may not be possible. Therefore, this transition may not occur until the first quarter of 2021.

- A preliminary review of the costs associated with **Electronic Document Management (EDM)** is underway and in the planning stages. An implementation date for EDM targeted for the second quarter of 2021. Associated costs will be included in the 2021 Ontario Works budget for review and approval by the Board.

RESOURCES REQUIRED:

MCCSS has confirmed that the “2021 Ontario Works planning allocations are being kept at the 2020 baselines to provide stability for Ontario Works delivery partners during the COVID-19 recovery period. Ontario Works delivery partners will be able to re-invest in additional capacity resulting from recent modernization investments and policy initiatives, to respond to local priorities and enhance outcomes for clients”.⁶

RISK IDENTIFIED AND MITIGATION:

One size fits all approaches do not work especially with respect to service delivery models for individuals with complex barriers. Varying levels of access to technology also impedes the ability for social assistance programming to evolve completely to a virtual electronic platform. With that said, ensuring that there is a variety of options available to meet the diverse and changing needs of the social assistance population is essential.

Many of the inefficiencies experienced during the pandemic would have been mitigated if more modern approaches were in place and available. Out-dated service delivery models result in unnecessary workload pressures that distract staff from focusing on what matters most, especially during times of crisis. While modern approaches would not have eliminated all of the challenges, especially with individuals with the most complex needs, they would have freed up valuable time for staff to focus on those most impacted by the pandemic.

COMMUNICATION:

Every opportunity to participate in MCCSS consultations related to modernization will be taken to ensure that Nipissing has a voice in the on-going development of new initiatives and the analysis of those already underway. Increased engagement of the Board, staff, recipients and community partners will also be essential during this period of transformation. As many of the initiatives are still in the prototype/pilot stage or awaiting implementation, not all of the details are known at this time. Further details will be communicated as new information becomes available.

⁶ Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services, SOCIAL ASSISTANCE RECOVERY AND RENEWAL, Internal Communication, Questions and Answers for Stakeholders and Partners, September 30, 2020.

CONCLUSION:

While there are differences in political ideologies on what income security reform and social assistance modernization means, it appears that all agree that it is time for change. Continuing to deliver social assistance through the current service delivery model has proven to be ineffective and in some cases can be seen as counterproductive. In order to help vulnerable populations with significant barriers move forward on the employment continuum, less time needs to be focused on paper based practices. A system designed around client centered services that leverages technology to support this work is what is required. As the Ministry moves forward with their modernization strategies, close attention will need to be paid to the implementation details. This will assist the Ontario Works program with determining if the changes are in the best interest of social assistance recipients and not simply cost saving measures that will prove detrimental to the quality of service being delivered.



BRIEFING NOTE SSE08-20

For Information or For Approval

Date: October 28, 2020

Purpose: Economic Impact of COVID-19

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

Reviewed by: Catherine Matheson, Chief Administrative Officer

INFORMATION:

Report SSE08-20 provides an overview of the impact COVID-19 has had on the economy, local labour market and on the Ontario Works caseload and is brought to the Board for information purposes.

BACKGROUND:

Experts everywhere are attempting to predict what the short and long term effects of the pandemic will be on the global economy. For the purpose and scope of this report, only the opinions of the Conference Board of Canada and the Bank of Canada are included.

Conference Board of Canada

The Conference Board of Canada stated the following in their Canadian Outlook Summary dated June 22, 2020. ¹

- The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have been severe. Mandated business closures and a collapse in both business and consumer confidence will result in an 8.2 per cent contraction for the Canadian economy this year—the worst annual contraction on record.
- At its peak, roughly 3 million Canadians had lost their jobs due to the pandemic.
- The road to recovery will be long and employment will still be nearly 1.1 million lower for 2020 as a whole than it was in 2019.
- Household consumption dipped by 11.3 per cent in the first quarter, and we expect a staggering 57.5 per cent drop in the second. And while a recovery is inevitable in the second half of the year, spending is not forecast to return to its pre-pandemic level until the second half of 2021.
- Exports are forecast to contract by 14.3 per cent in 2020. Unsurprisingly in this uncertain environment, firms are reluctant to invest in new capacity, and we expect an 11.3 per cent drop in private sector investment this year.

¹ Conference Board of Canada, Canadian Outlook Summary, June 22, 2020, <https://www.conferenceboard.ca/e-library/abstract.aspx?did=10737>

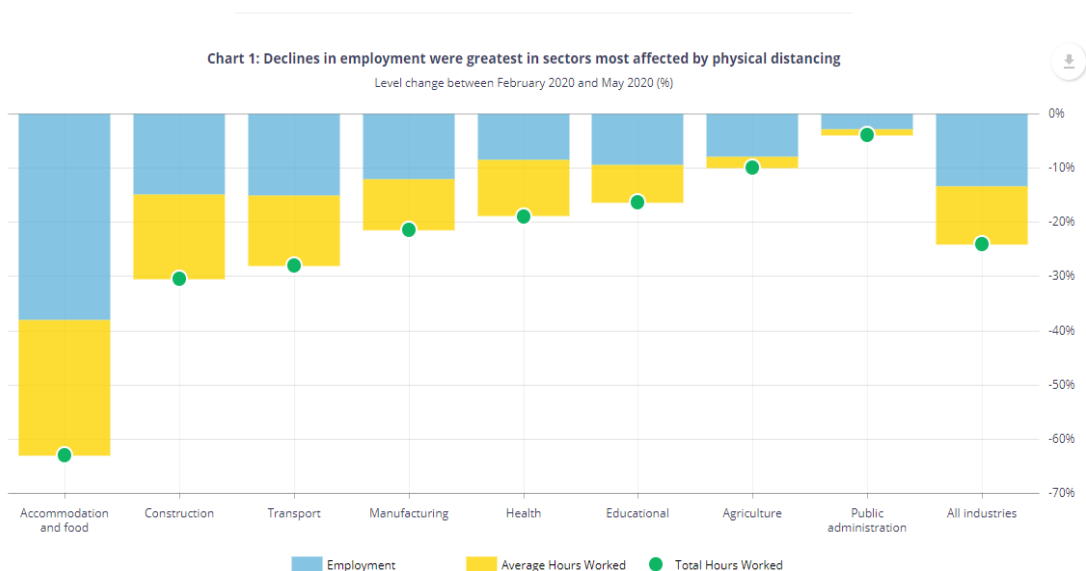
Bank of Canada

In the Bank of Canada's report entitled *Our COVID-19 Response: Navigating Diverse Economic Impacts* it is stated that "the pandemic and related containment measures have deeply affected Canadians and the Canadian economy. The impacts have been different across sectors and regions. The economic recovery will also look different across the country as local economies start to re-open. Sectors that rely on social interactions, non-essential spending and foreign sales have been particularly hard hit by COVID-19"². In this report the Bank of Canada also made the following observations with respect to the economic impact of the pandemic:³

- The initial impact of the pandemic was greatest in the travel, entertainment and food service sectors.
- Sectors involving face-to-face personal services, such as hair salons and dental offices, have faced significant losses.
- Commodity-producing firms dealing with lower global prices for resources continue to be heavily affected, especially in the energy sector.
- Sectors considered essential, those that were able to move easily to telework and those that could offer their services in a different way—such as virtual health care and grocery delivery—may not have felt the impact as deeply.

Chart 1 below illustrates the declines in employment by sector.

Chart 1



Sectors Positively Impacted by the Pandemic

It is important to note that while many sectors/industries have suffered great losses during the pandemic, others have survived and are thriving. As the world changed and consumers moved indoors, the demands on many businesses shifted, but not all in the

² Our Covid-19 response: navigating diverse economic impacts, <https://www.bankofcanada.ca/2020/06/our-covid-19-response-navigating-diverse-economic-impacts/>

³ Our Covid-19 response: navigating diverse economic impacts, <https://www.bankofcanada.ca/2020/06/our-covid-19-response-navigating-diverse-economic-impacts/>

same direction. The following represents examples of some of the sectors/industries who have seen an increase in demand:

- E-Commerce/On-line shopping platforms
- Certain technologies/software producers
- Manufacturers of personal protective equipment, hand sanitizing products, ventilators and other related healthcare products
- Pharmaceutical companies and healthcare providers
- Producers of home exercise/recreation products
- Food producers and grocers
- Home entertainment/social media platforms

Labour Market Group

As noted above there are regional differences on how COVID-19 has impacted local economies. In the Labour Market Group's most recent Monthly Jobs Report for August, the following local labour market data is provided: ⁴

- There were 305 job postings recorded for Nipissing District which represents a 19.7 percent decrease from the previous month and a 34 percent decrease from the current five year August average.
- There were 182 unique employers who posted jobs in August which represents a 13.5 percent decrease from the five year August average.
- Of the 305 jobs posted 50.3 percent do not require post-secondary education with 15.9 percent of that number not requiring formal education at all.
- 44.2 percent are entry level with experience being an asset
- 62.3 percent are full time opportunities.
- Sales and Service is the number one occupational category who posted positions.
- Healthcare and Social Assistance was the number one industry hiring.

Ontario Works Employment Outcomes January-August 2020

The decrease in local employment opportunities noted above can also be seen in the Ontario Works year-to-date outcomes. Table 1 below illustrates Nipissing's actual employment outcomes in relation to targeted achievements and the provincial average on all four employment measures. Please note that the targets identified in Table 1 follow the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) mandated requirement to increase outcomes by 3% over the average 2019 actual achievements.

⁴ The Labour Market Group, AUGUST MONTHLY JOBS REPORT, http://thelabourmarketgroup.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/August-2020-Jobs-Report_FULL.pdf

Table 1

% of caseload with employment earnings	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Avg
2020 Outcome	14.27%	13.00%	12.68%	11.68%	7.59%	4.89%	4.95%	5.44%					9.31%
Targeted Outcome	14.27%	14.27%	14.27%	14.27%	14.27%	14.27%	14.27%	14.27%	14.27%	14.27%	14.27%	14.27%	14.27%
Province	13.97%	13.17%	12.80%	9.94%	6.94%	4.92%	5.26%	6.30%					9.16%
Average monthly employment earnings per case	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Avg
2020 Outcome	\$861.00	\$851.00	\$839.00	\$870.00	\$766.00	\$826.00	\$900.00	\$916.00					\$853.63
Targeted Outcome	\$891.10	\$891.10	\$891.10	\$891.10	\$891.10	\$891.10	\$891.10	\$891.10	\$891.10	\$891.10	\$891.10	\$891.10	\$891.10
Province	\$893.00	\$895.00	\$890.00	\$868.00	\$838.00	\$976.00	\$987.00	\$958.00					\$913.13
% of terminations exiting to employment	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Avg
2020 Outcome	22.55%	30.23%	22.55%	11.46%	18.52%	28.24%	27.12%	35.21%					24.49%
Targeted Outcome	30.72%	30.72%	30.72%	30.72%	30.72%	30.72%	30.72%	30.72%	30.72%	30.72%	30.72%	30.72%	30.72%
Province	22.35%	23.14%	21.25%	14.64%	16.04%	22.35%	24.28%	23.67%					20.97%
% of caseload exiting to employment	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Avg
2020 Outcome	1.15%	1.30%	1.14%	0.54%	0.25%	1.25%	0.83%	1.32%					0.97%
Targeted Outcome	2.22%	2.22%	2.22%	2.22%	2.22%	2.22%	2.22%	2.22%	2.22%	2.22%	2.22%	2.22%	2.22%
Province	1.06%	0.75%	0.78%	0.57%	0.27%	1.04%	1.12%	1.14%					0.84%

As you can see in Table 1 above, Nipissing's Ontario Works year-to-date achievements are higher than the provincial average on three of the four measures. However, in relation to the targeted outcomes, although not yet official for 2020, achievements are far below where they should be based on a straight line projection.

CURRENT STATUS/STEPS TAKEN TO DATE:

While the overall economic outlook indicates that recovery will be a slow and gradual process there are strategies at a program and policy level that can be put in place to respond to the significant challenges presented by COVID-19. In the early stages of the pandemic the following measures were implemented quickly by MCCSS:

- The mandated requirement to obtain wet signatures was lifted temporarily to eliminate the need for face to face interactions.
- A hold on outcome planning requirements was implemented temporarily suspending mandatory participation in employment enhancing activities/job searching for social assistance recipients.

While these measures along with other systemic changes and mandated safety precautions were necessary, they presented unique challenges and in some cases, had an adverse effect on the delivery of employment assistance.

Examples of these challenges are as follows:

- The amount of assistance provided under the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) in many cases exceeded what employed social assistance recipients were earning prior to the pandemic. This resulted in it being financially

advantageous for recipients to remain on CERB rather than reconnecting with the labour market.

- Communication with recipients without access to a telephone or email, many of whom are at increased risk of contracting COVID-19, has been more difficult.
- Some external non-DNSSAB services that Ontario Works recipients require have been unavailable or had limited access.
- The absence of face to face interaction has made it more difficult to fully assess a social assistance recipient's level of employability and/or overall wellness, especially with respect to individuals with complex barriers related to mental health and/or addiction.
- School and daycare closures negatively impacted the ability for many recipients who wanted to return to work or attach to the labour market for the first time.

Strategy

The Ontario Works program has been busy modifying existing programming to meet the demands of a virtual service model. As the province has now entered stage three, children have returned to school, daycares are open and there is a gradual re-opening of the economy, several of the challenges noted above have been largely diminished.

On a positive note, according to the Labour Market Group's Monthly Jobs Report it appears that employers are looking for employees and there are vacancies across the District. Even better news is that the Ontario Works program has candidates to fill these positions. Strategic planning on how to effectively connect these recipients to these opportunities in the middle of a pandemic, where participation in the Ontario Works program is not required, is essential. Figure 1 below illustrates several of the strategies that are either underway or awaiting implementation, many of which are directly aligned with the needs of local employers.

Figure 1

Employment Services Strategies

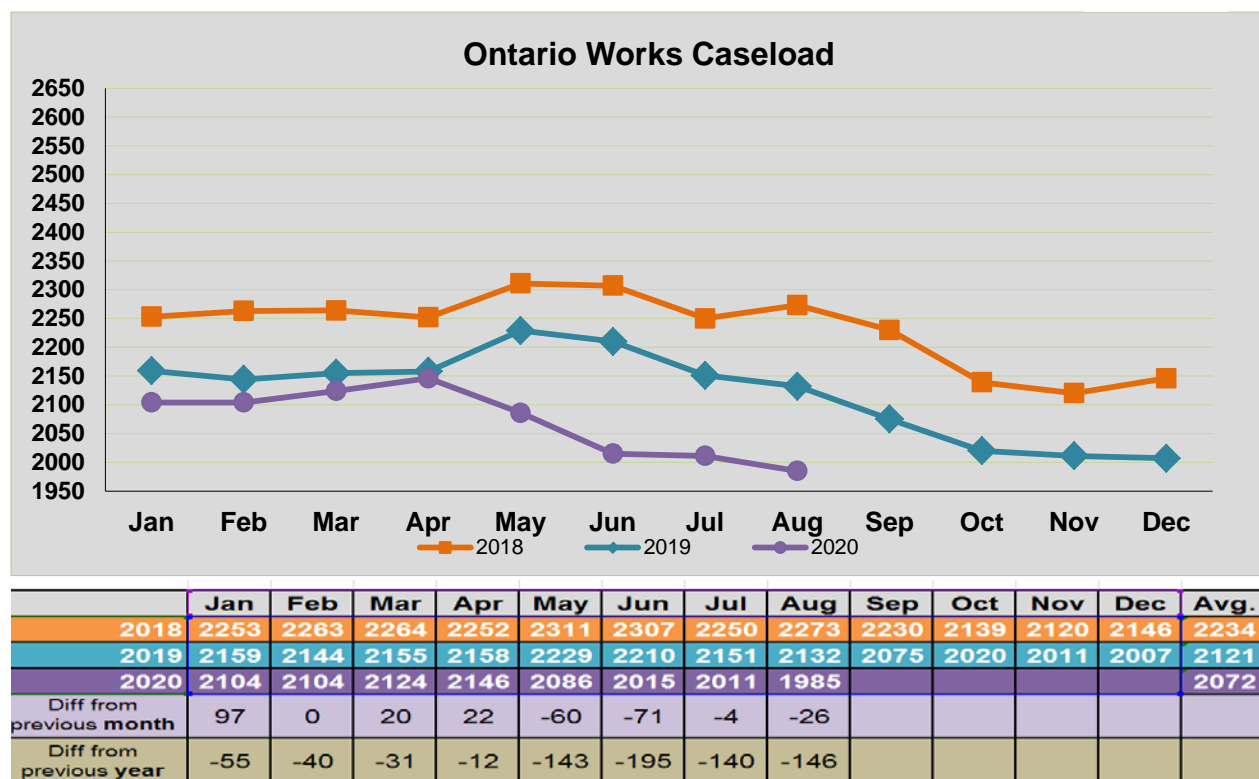
Completed	Current	Future
Re-established Participation Agreement updates on June 15, 2020 despite the Ministry's suspension of participation requirements.	NPREP continuation into 2020/2021 to connect social assistance recipients to post-secondary education opportunities with individualized supports to promote success.	PSW Partnership with Canadore (3rd Cohort) Project Proposal to be submitted in Q4 2020.
Re-introduction of face-to-face meetings for essential services only in a safe and controlled environment effective October 5th..	Virtual Employment Services including one-to-one discussions relating to resume, cover letter and interview preparation, importance of soft skills etc. It also includes remote workshops.	Early Childhood Practitioner certificate program partnership proposal for 2021 is underway.
Targeted approach to deliver employment supports to Job Ready recipients in receipt of CERB.	Continue to promote and connect Job Ready participants with the Get Trained Workers program.	Partnership with College Boreal to offer a retraining program based on identified labour market needs is in the initial planning stages - targeted implementation date Q1/Q2 2021.
Resume Blitz to ensure that all Job Ready recipients in the database have a current and up-to-date resume on file.	Continue to leverage the functionality of the employment database to assist with the screening and matching of recipients to available job opportunities throughout the District.	Get Trained Workers Employment Database enhancements are underway - anticipated launch date to new platform with increased functionality targeted for November/December 2020.
	Continue to leverage partnerships and seek collaborative and innovative solutions with Employment Ontario programs to improve the overall delivery of employment services in the District.	Fifth Wheel training opportunity is in the early phases of development - implementation date targeted for November/December 2020.

RISK IDENTIFIED AND MITIGATION:

Based on the information in this report, it is clear that it is going to take time for the labour market to fully recover from the pandemic. While the federal government recently extended CERB and created a new Canada Recovery Benefit (CRB), not all recipients of CERB will transition to the CRB.

To date and as presented in report SSE05-20 the Ontario Works caseload has not increased due to the pandemic. In fact, as you can see from Figure 2 below⁵, for 2020 the average year-to-date caseload has been decreasing since May.

Figure 2



It is believed that this decrease is largely due to the speed by which the federal government implemented the CERB. How long this delayed impact on the caseload will last is unknown. While most of the Ontario Works program is 100 percent funded by the Province, employment and program delivery continues to be cost shared. Therefore, when caseloads rise there is a potential impact on the municipal levy. For this reason, in the coming months it will be important that there is adequate funding available at a broader systemic level to support the work that may be involved in reconnecting social assistance and non-social assistance recipients with the labour market.

Further, with respect to the achievement of outcomes, MCCSS has acknowledged that outcome targets in the current economic environment will be difficult to achieve. In a memo from MCCSS dated March 26, 2020, the Ministry stated that for the period of

⁵ Social Assistance Performance Operations Report, Social Assistance Extranet, <https://www.sa.mcscs.gov.on.ca/program-areas/program-integrity/sams-transition-performance-reports/>

April 1st to September 30th Transfer Payment Recipients would not be held accountable to meet predefined service targets or performance measures.⁶ What is not known at this time is whether or not Transfer Payment Recipients will be held accountable for the months that fall outside of this date range. The good news is that the Ontario Works team achieved 1780 points in 2019 out of a possible 2000 in the two year cycle; therefore this minimizes any risk of potential recovery by MCCSS.

COMMUNICATION:

Continued advocacy with all levels of government will be required to ensure that the cost to support the well-being of individuals and families at the local level, who have been negatively impacted by the pandemic, does not fall to municipalities. To date, both the provincial and federal government have demonstrated their commitment to making policy decisions that have minimized this impact, at least in the area of social assistance delivery.

CONCLUSION:

The Conference Board of Canada states that “with the worst of the recession likely over, the outlook for 2021 is brighter. The economy is forecast to rebound by 6.7 per cent in 2021 and 4.8 per cent in 2022. As the threat of the pandemic eases, how well the reopening of the economy and the withdrawal of government support is managed will be a crucial determinant of the economy’s trajectory over the next several years.”⁷ It will be imperative in the coming months that the Ontario Works program continues to monitor local labour market activity along with other economic indicators to ensure that it is well positioned to withstand future changes, if and when a second wave of COVID-19 becomes a reality.

⁶ Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services, Internal Memorandum, COVID-19 Response, March 26, 2020.

⁷ Conference Board of Canada, Canadian Outlook Summary, June 22, 2020, <https://www.conferenceboard.ca/e-library/abstract.aspx?did=10737>

BRIEFING NOTE HS29-20

For information For Approval

Date: October 28, 2020

Purpose: Role of the Community Advisory Board (CAB)

Prepared by: Stacey Cyopeck, Manager, Housing Programs

Reviewed by: Catherine Matheson, CAO

INFORMATION:

This report outlines the role of the Nipissing District Housing and Homelessness Partnership (NDHHP), hereinafter referred to as the Community Advisory Board (CAB).

BACKGROUND:

- The District of Nipissing Social Services Administration Board (DNSSAB) is the appointed Community Entity (CE) representative in the District of Nipissing and is responsible for organizing the CAB and setting the direction to address
- homelessness issues in the District.
- The CAB is responsible for managing funds received from the Government of Canada under the Reaching Home initiative (formerly the Housing Partnering Strategy). These funds are disbursed to Service Agencies throughout the district by a Request for Proposal process.

PURPOSE:

- The CAB is responsible for addressing homelessness issues in the District of Nipissing by undertaking the following:
 - Aims to increase access and options to a range of stable programs, supports and/or functional accommodations for people in the District of Nipissing who are homeless or at imminent risk of becoming homeless (will lose their accommodations within 30 days).
 - Aims to act as a representative and/or link to homeless serving sectors in the Nipissing/North Bay Community.

MANDATE:

- To support the DNSSAB Strategic Plan, the CAB works collaboratively with community partners to assist in the implementation of the 10 Year Housing and Homelessness plan and continues to focus on homelessness prevention.
- The CAB provides guidance and recommendations to the DNSSAB on issues related to homelessness in the District of Nipissing including but not limited to the following:
 - Develops recommendations with member agencies on policies and strategies to support priorities established through the community planning process
 - Defines needs, services, and gaps in services based on objective analysis of the best information available and develops strategies that use existing resources to address needs and issues;
 - Reviews, and recommends project proposals based on federal funding criteria;
 - Oversees the review of community homelessness and housing plans including responding to suggestions for revisions of the plans and updating priority service needs;
 - Provides a forum for information sharing regarding new and innovative projects that address housing and homeless needs
 - Catalyst for developing and supporting a local homeless-servicing delivery system and in particular the implementation of a local Housing First approach;
 - Provides a forum for agency stake holders to communicate and discuss specific concerns around individuals and their obstacles towards finding permanent housing within North Bay/Nipissing
- From time to time, the CAB will assume an advocacy role for changes in areas of mutual interest:
 - Writes letters of concern on particular topics to decision-making bodies as appropriate;
 - Coordinates other lobbying efforts to effect changes to decrease homelessness in the District

MEMBERSHIP:

- Membership on the CAB currently includes representation from the following community partners:
 - Low Income People Involvement (LIPI)
 - Crisis Centre North Bay (CCNB)
 - Canadian Red Cross
 - Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP)
 - Nipissing Mental Health Housing Support Services (NMHHSS)
 - Ojibway Women's Lodge
 - Aids Committee North Bay (ACNBA)
 - YES Employment Services
 - Nipissing Transition House
 - Nipissing Legal Clinic
 - Victim Services

- Legion Service Bureau
- Veterans Affairs Canada
- North Bay Indigenous Friendship Centre (NBIFC)
- Big Brothers Big Sisters
- North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit (NBPSDHU)
- North Bay Jail
- North Bay Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinic (NBNPLC)
- Triple Link Housing
- Salvation Army
- North Bay Regional Health Centre (NBRHC)
- Near North Landlord's Association (NNLA)
- District of Nipissing Social Services Administration Board – Ontario Works (DNSSAB-OW)
- Service Canada

BRIEFING NOTE HS35-20

For Information or For Approval

Date: October 28, 2020

Purpose: Ontario Building a Modern, Connected and Comprehensive Mental Health and Addictions System

Prepared by: Stacey Cyopeck, Manager, Housing Programs

Reviewed by: Catherine Matheson, CAO

FOR INFORMATION:

This report outlines the recent announcement from the Province regarding funding for critical mental health and addictions supports during COVID-19, for information purposes.

BACKGROUND:

On October 7, 2020, the Province announced an additional \$176 million to help expand access for critical mental health and addictions supports during COVID-19. This announcement was made jointly by the Premier, the Minister of Health and the Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions.

The ongoing investment expands on the government's historic commitment to invest billions in mental health over 10 years, and will also provide care for thousands of people, including frontline health workers and first responders, who require critical supports during these challenging times.

The increased funding will help address urgent gaps in care, enhance access to mental health and addictions services, create new supports and expand programs in several priority areas, including:

- Community-based services in English and French, including services for children and youth;
- Mental health and justice services;
- Supportive housing for individuals with serious mental health and addiction challenges, and who are either homeless or at risk of becoming homeless;
- Community and residential addictions, including treatment and care for opioid addictions;
- Increased supports for Indigenous peoples, families, and communities; and
- More hospital in-patient beds for mental health and addiction patients.

As part of this funding, the province is investing in targeted community and residential addictions services including:

- **\$4 million for nurse practitioners for detox services** to improve the medical management of clients who are withdrawing from substance use in residential withdrawal management facilities;
- **\$8 million for addictions day and evening care** to increase access to intensive non-residential addictions and substance use treatment services for youth and adults;

- **\$3.5 million for in-home/mobile withdrawal management services** to increase access to community withdrawal management services for hard to service clients, including those located in rural areas; and
- **Over \$900,000 for an additional four inpatient beds at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH)** to support capacity pressures at CAMH.

The North Bay Regional Health Centre is receiving provincial help to expand access for mental health and addictions supports during COVID-19.

Up to \$475,000 will be split between day treatment for addictions/substance use (\$320,000) and nurse practitioners for detox services (\$155,000).

Further to the above mentioned announcement, on September 10, 2020, the Ontario government is also providing an additional \$14.75 million to increase access to mental health and addictions services across the province. This funding is one time funding to immediately expand access to services during the COVID-19 outbreak.

This funding is intended to help support families, young people, children, frontline workers, and Indigenous communities.

The investment was provided through the *Support for People and Jobs Fund* and will help community-based mental health and addictions programs meet increasing service demands. The funding is being distributed as follows:

- **\$7 million to safely expand in-person mental health and addictions services** to bridge current gaps brought on by COVID-19, including community-based services, congregate living and supportive housing;
- **\$4.75 million to support culturally safe services for Indigenous communities**, with a focus on children and youth; and
- **\$3 million to expand virtual and online services** including addictions supports, Internet-based Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (ICBT) and an online peer support community for mental health.

CONCLUSION:

The pandemic has been very challenging for many individuals, especially those with mental health and addictions challenges. Through these funding announcements, the Provincial government is recognizing the importance of mental health and the need to support individuals as the pandemic wears on.

BRIEFING NOTE HS33-20

For information or For Approval

Date: October 28, 2020

Purpose: Reaching Home – Canada's COVID-19 Economic Response Plan to Support People Experiencing and At Risk of Homelessness

Prepared by: Stacey Cyopect, Manager Housing Programs

Reviewed by: Catherine Matheson, CAO

INFORMATION:

This report outlines details of the Reaching Home – Additional COVID-19 Funding announcement for information purposes.

BACKGROUND:

On March 18, 2020, the Federal Government announced it would be providing Reaching Home with an additional \$157.5 million to support people experiencing homelessness during the COVID-19 outbreak.

An initial funding allocation in the amount of \$292,252 was provided to the Nipissing District under Canada's COVID-19 Economic Response Plan to Support People Experiencing and At Risk of Homelessness. This initial allocation was utilized to offset the operating costs of the COVID-19 Responsive Low Barrier Shelter.

On September 21, 2020, the Government of Canada announced additional funding of \$236.7 million for Reaching Home for investments until March 31, 2021. The new incremental funding allocation for the Nipissing District is **\$377,557.00**.

Communities have been encouraged to use these additional Reaching Home funds to:

- 1. Extend emergency COVID-19 measures** (e.g., investments to reduce shelter overcrowding, secure isolation facilities)
- 2. Invest in activities that promote housing stability** (e.g., placements into permanent housing, particularly for individuals currently in temporary accommodations)
- 3. Undertake activities to prevent future inflows into homelessness** (e.g., paying rent/utility arrears, landlord-tenant mediation services).

Funding received through the COVID-19 Economic Response Plan is to be invested in its allocated stream and Community Entities can directly undertake COVID-19 activities using either the base Reaching Home envelope or COVID-19 Economic Response Plan funding. Funds can be used for eligible activities retroactive to April 1st 2020 through to March 31st, 2021.

At the beginning of the pandemic, a survey was completed by community service providers to determine the key priorities in the District. The four key priorities identified were food, PPE, Housing, and Housing Supports. Through collaboration with the CAB, a plan for the allocation of funds will be developed, addressing the key priorities determined through the community survey.

RISK IDENTIFICATION AND MITIGATION

In order to ensure that the DNSSAB is in compliance with the Reaching Home Directives, the DNSSAB, within 30 business days of receiving funds, is required to provide an investment plan that describes how the additional funds will support the community's homelessness response to COVID-19.

This plan will clearly describe planned investments in housing placements/stability as well as activities that will help prevent homelessness, and assist in containing the spread of COVID-19, particularly as colder weather approaches. The investment plans will not prevent organizations from directing funding in a different manner should alternate needs emerge.

RESOURCES REQUIRED

Reaching Home is entirely funded by the federal government, and therefore does not currently require any municipal funding. The DNSSAB intends to use the 15% maximum expenditure for Administration Fees for the administration of Canada's COVID-19 Economic Response Plan to Support People Experiencing and At Risk of Homelessness.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN/ COMMUNICATION PLAN:

Based on the tight timelines provided regarding this additional funding, the DNSSAB (CE) will draft an investment plan which will be endorsed by the CAB (Community Advisory Board). The DNSSAB will be working closely with the CAB to formulate the investment plan and ensure the DNSSAB is presented with this plan once it has been drafted.

Conclusion:

Reducing chronic homelessness is one of the five core outcomes of the Reaching Home program. Through Canada's COVID-19 Economic Response Plan to Support People Experiencing and At Risk of Homelessness, Nipissing District will have an opportunity to further foster the prevention and reduction of homelessness, while also addressing pandemic specific needs in the District.