

BRIEFING NOTE HS39-20

For information or For Approval

Date: November 25, 2020
Purpose: Social Services Relief Fund – Phase 2 Allocations
Prepared by: Stacey Cyopeck, Manager, Housing Programs
Reviewed by: Catherine Matheson, CAO

BACKGROUND

DNSSAB's initial Social Services Relief Fund (SSRF) Phase 1 allocation of \$589,200 was announced in April 2020 and was fully expended as of July 7, 2020. This initial funding was disbursed to a total of 21 community social service agencies. The four key priorities were Food/Meal Distribution, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), Housing Supports (i.e. Rent/Utility Arrears), and Homelessness/Shelters.

On July 2, 2020, DNSSAB received notification regarding \$150 million in new provincial funding, with an additional \$212 million of funding announced on August 12, 2020 as part of the federal-provincial Safe Restart Agreement for a total of \$362 million.

These funds were being made available as part of a second phase of funding under the Social Services Relief Fund (SSRF), and under Phase 2, the DNSSAB is eligible to receive an initial planning allocation of \$4,225,615 in 2020-21.

Prior to receiving SSRF Phase 2 funding, the DNSSAB was required to submit a business case to the Ministry by September 11, 2020, providing an outline on how the initial planning allocation will be used.

On October 26, 2020, DNSSAB received approval of the funding requested in the business case. (Appendix A)

REPORT

Priorities outlined in the business case were determined through the previous community partner survey and discussions with the Community Advisory Board (CAB) – Nipissing District Housing and Homelessness Partnership and associated subcommittees, as well as the District's 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan.

The business case focused on the following priorities:

1. Emergency Shelter Services – The plan outlined the following supports to the district’s Emergency Shelter system:
 - a. Low Barrier Shelter Operations – The plan includes recovering costs for operating the shelter as of July 7th. The plan also extends the operations of the low barrier shelter to March 31st. Additionally, funds were set aside to extend services to 24 hours – either on site or through day programming off site.
 - b. Capital for the Low Barrier Shelter – The plan includes the recovery of capital costs for the low barrier shelter at 590 Chippewa Street.
 - c. Isolation – This includes costs to secure an isolation space, as well as anticipated costs associated with staffing when required.
 - d. Overflow – The plan includes costs associated with increased overflow due to social distancing requirements.

2. Transitional Housing – The pandemic has further highlighted the need for additional transitional housing units for the District’s most vulnerable population, and the business case includes capital to build 20 additional housing units on site at 590 Chippewa Street.

The following table further outlines the breakdown of allocations amongst each of the categories.

Activity	Component	Total Allocation
Emergency Shelter Services	Low Barrier Shelter Operations	\$972,613
Emergency Shelter Services	Daytime Shelter/Warming Centre	\$415,775
Emergency Shelter Services	Overflow	\$225,000
Emergency Shelter Services	Isolation	\$151,984
Capital	Low Barrier Shelter	\$220,000
Capital	Transitional Housing	\$2,113,249.55

Additionally, Service Managers are permitted to retain a maximum of 3% of the total allocation for administrative costs.

Included in the business case for the Social Services Relief Fund Phase 2 funding, there was also a question pertaining to other priorities that may be considered in the District should future funding be available. The following priorities were included:

1. Investigating 590 Chippewa Street West in North Bay as a future campus model for housing and support services for individuals experiencing homelessness and struggling with mental illness and addictions. Ultimately, the DNSSAB is seeking to explore a holistic model for homelessness, mental health and addiction services where individuals will receive the supports they require to transition to independent living. The campus model proposed also conforms to the report from the Mayor’s Round Table on Mental Health and Addictions.
2. Operating funding to continue to deliver the year-round 24/7 essential low-barrier shelter services.
3. Operating funding to maintain isolation services beyond March 31st, 2021.
4. Increase the number of emergency shelter beds in North Bay. To increase the number of shelter beds, the current 19-bed shelter (Four Elms) could be expanded to potentially

accommodate an additional 16 beds. This would take advantage of staffing already on-site and would result in the centralization of emergency shelter services. Funding would be required for both capital and operating.

5. Capital for housing with individualized supports, a crucial need which would fill a gap in the District's housing continuum.
6. Funding for community social services agencies that have experienced budget pressures due to the pandemic. Funding is required for additional PPE, cleaning, and staffing as well as emergency financial assistance programs, such as rent/utility relief, moving forward.

RISK IDENTIFIED AND MITIGATION

All funding provided under the operating component that is not spent by March 31, 2021 or that is not used for an eligible expense under these Program Guidelines, shall be returned to MMAH on demand. Moreover, under the capital component, any funding that is not committed by January 31st, 2021 and spent by December 31, 2021, or that is not used for an eligible capital expense, shall be returned to MMAH on demand. Service Managers have flexibility to move funds between the various components indicated in the business case to ensure full uptake of funds.

CONCLUSION

Building off the successful administration of SSRF Phase 1 funding, the DNSSAB will continue to ensure that the high level of quality program administration is conveyed in the upcoming administration of the SSRF Phase 2 funding. As the pandemic wears on, additional housing related challenges will be faced in the District. The SSRF Phase 2 funding allocation will be used to assist in meeting these challenges and to foster benefits post-pandemic.

**Ministry of
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October 26, 2020

Mark King
Board Chair, Nipissing DSSAB
200 Mclyntre Street East
North Bay ON P1B 8J8

Dear Mark King:

**Re: Social Services Relief Fund (SSRF) – Phase 2
Service Manager Business Case Approval – with follow up direction**

As you know, this summer, my ministry announced \$362 million in new provincial and federal funding under a second phase of the Social Services Relief Fund (SSRF) to help protect vulnerable people from COVID-19. The Social Services Relief Fund has been effective in supporting Service Managers and Indigenous Program Administrators to respond quickly, adapt services, and address the housing and economic impacts of COVID-19 in their communities. The additional investment of SSRF Phase Two can help Service Managers and Indigenous Program Administrators continue to protect homeless shelter staff and residents, expand rent support programming and create longer-term housing solutions.

This brings the government's total Social Services Relief Fund investment provided to Service Managers and Indigenous Program Administrators to \$510 million.

This is part of our commitment of up to \$4 billion for municipalities across the province under the federal-provincial Safe Restart Agreement. This funding will help municipalities protect the health and well-being of the people of Ontario while delivering critical public services, such as public transit and shelters, as the province continues down the path of renewal, growth and economic recovery.

Prior to receiving SSRF Phase 2 funds, you were asked to submit a business case to the Ministry. The business case process provided an opportunity for you to outline how your initial planning allocation would be used and assisted the Ministry in ensuring that funds were being directed to the communities most in need. The business cases were reviewed by the Ministry, as well as an inter-ministerial working group, which made recommendations on funding decisions.

The Ministry has now completed its review of your business case, and I am pleased to confirm that we have **approved** your plan with follow up direction in accordance with a total planning allocation of **\$4,225,615** for the fiscal year 2020-21. Ministry staff will be in contact with you in the coming days to discuss feedback on your business case.

I want to acknowledge that, in addition to the capital and operating plans being approved with this letter, many Service Managers have submitted as part of their business cases additional capital proposals (i.e., additional proposals where submitted in response to Question 12 in the business cases). Where applicable, the Province encourages Service Managers to consider submitting these additional capital proposals under the federal government's Rapid Housing Initiative to maximize the potential benefits to Ontario's housing as well as the good work done by Service Managers as part of this process.

As communicated to you in August 2020, to ensure SSRF Phase 2 funding is targeted to where it is needed most, the Ministry has held back a portion of the total SSRF Phase 2 funding from the initial planning allocations. Decisions on how to allocate this hold back will be determined over the coming weeks and months based on emerging public health needs and progress to date as indicated through required program reporting. This will allow us to target these remaining investments where they are most required, as the public health situation continues to evolve. Service Managers will be notified when decisions are made to allocate this remaining funding.

SSRF Phase 2 Funding and Reporting

Now that your business case has been approved, we will provide an initial payment of up to 75 per cent of operating funding based on the projections made in your approved business case. This payment will be processed shortly.

Funding for capital projects will be dispersed based on project submissions and the funding schedule outlined in the Program Guidelines. For each capital project, you must complete and submit a Project Information Form through the Transfer Payment Ontario (TPON) system for Ministry approval.

Please note that you are required to submit an interim report by **December 15, 2020** on your use of SSRF Phase 2 funds and projected spending. A subsequent operating payment will be made following the submission and approval of this report and attestation.

As part of the quarterly reporting requirements, you will also be required to report actual expenditures for the previous financial quarter and revised projections for subsequent quarters by the relevant spending category by **January 31, 2021**. For your year-end reports, you will also be required to report on data collected on specific performance indicators.

Please note that all SSRF Phase 2 reports must be submitted through the TPON system, in accordance with the program guidelines.

Thank you again for your tireless work supporting Ontario's most vulnerable residents during this challenging time. I appreciate your continued commitment to ensuring that the province's significant investments through SSRF are directed to where they are needed most, and I look forward to continuing our work together as we serve the people of Ontario.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Steve Clark". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Steve Clark
Minister

c. Catherine Matheson, Chief Administrative Officer
Stacey Cyopeck, Manager, Housing Program