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## **DNSSAB Prepares for ROMA 2025: Advocating for Key Issues in Nipissing District**

*Bridging Gaps, Building Hope: DNSSAB's Strategic Advocacy for Nipissing's Most Vulnerable*

**North Bay, ON:** The District of Nipissing Social Services Administration Board (DNSSAB) is preparing for the Rural Ontario Municipal Association (ROMA) conference in Toronto, scheduled for January 19-21, 2025. This annual event provides a crucial platform for municipal officials and district social services board representatives to engage directly with provincial ministry representatives on pressing rural issues.

DNSSAB has submitted five delegation requests for ROMA 2025, focusing on critical areas affecting the Nipissing District. These key areas, outlined below, represent the pressing needs of the community:

- **Food Insecurity:** DNSSAB is seeking increased social assistance rates, indexing of Ontario Works rates to inflation, stable funding for food banks and community food programs, support for nutrition programs, and a collaborative approach to address poverty.
- **Security Funding:** A request for \$500,000 in annualized funding to cover security costs and additional grant opportunities increase capacity and local health and social services programs and supports.
- **Affordable Housing:** DNSSAB is showcasing 182 shovel-ready units and is requesting both capital and operating funding to boost new housing development in the Nipissing District.
- **Mobile Outreach for Homelessness:** The Board is requesting \$313,000 in annualized funding for a mobile outreach team and \$65,000 in one-time funding for a vehicle to provide support throughout the District.
- **Learn & Stay Program for Childcare:** DNSSAB is proposing to expand the successful healthcare model to address childcare staffing shortages, particularly for Indigenous-led, Francophone, and English services.



"These delegation requests reflect our commitment to addressing the real, urgent needs of our community," states DNSSAB Board Chair, Mark King. "Behind every request is a human story: a family struggling to put food on the table, a parent seeking affordable childcare, or an individual searching for stable housing. We're not just seeking funding; we're advocating for dignity, opportunity, and the fundamental right of every person in Nipissing to have their basic needs met with compassion and respect."

While full confirmation of which delegations will proceed is pending, DNSSAB is optimistic about the opportunity to advocate for these crucial issues. An additional media release will be issued next week with more details on confirmed delegations and information on media interview opportunities during ROMA.

King is also on the executive of the Northern Ontario Service Deliverers Association (NOSDA) that will be meeting with provincial representatives on several challenges facing district social services board in the north. Some of these delegations will be in collaboration with the Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities (FONOM) and the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association (NOMA).

**About ROMA:** ROMA takes pride in promoting, supporting and enhancing strong and effective rural governments. About 270 of Ontario's 444 municipalities have populations of less than 10,000, while scores more are rural in character. The rural arm of the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, ROMA advocates for policies and programs that will help build thriving rural Ontario communities.

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