



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DNSSAB at the 2026 ROMA Conference

Advocating for housing, homelessness, child care, and community well-being in Nipissing District

North Bay, ON: The District of Nipissing Social Services Administration Board (DNSSAB) is currently participating in the 2026 Rural Ontario Municipal Association (ROMA) Conference alongside more than 1,900 participants from more than 300 municipalities and organizations across Ontario. The conference, held in Toronto from January 18 to 20, provides an important opportunity for rural and northern communities to connect directly with provincial decision-makers about the challenges they face and the solutions they need.

DNSSAB is bringing forward a series of focused advocacy items, supported by five scheduled delegation meetings, that reflect urgent pressures in the Nipissing District related to housing, homelessness, community-based mental health and substance use supports, licensed child care, and workforce development.

DNSSAB's Key Advocacy Items for ROMA 2026

Capital Funding for 183 Shovel-Ready Affordable Housing Units

Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing

DNSSAB is seeking capital funding to move shovel-ready affordable housing units into construction to help reduce homelessness and increase new housing in the District.

Sustaining and Expanding Urban Native Housing

Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing

DNSSAB and the District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board are advocating for dedicated, ongoing funding to sustain and grow Urban Native Housing so culturally safe homes remain available for Indigenous residents in Nipissing and Thunder Bay.

Funding Community Paramedicine for Mental Health and Substance Use Supports

Ministry of Health

DNSSAB is advocating for dedicated funding to strengthen Community Paramedicine capacity to support increased outreach and community-response paramedic staff, expanded mental health and harm reduction supports, and deeper partnerships with hospitals, shelters, housing, and social services.

Improving Child Care Efficiency by Reducing Red Tape and Modernizing Funding Rules

Ministry of Red Tape Reduction

DNSSAB is advocating for streamlining licensed child care regulatory requirements, enabling workforce funding to be directed where it is most needed, and modernizing the cost-based funding formula so centres are not penalized for high occupancy and can operate sustainably without unnecessary administrative barriers.

Piloting the Learn and Stay Program for Early Childhood Education (ECE)

Ministry of Colleges, Universities, Research Excellence and Security

DNSSAB is advocating for piloting the Learn and Stay Program for Early Childhood Educators in partnership with northern colleges, to reduce tuition barriers, strengthen the ECE workforce, and increase access to licensed child care spaces.

“ROMA gives us the chance to bring the North’s lived realities directly to the people who can help change them,” said Mark King, DNSSAB Board Chair. “Across our communities we see residents struggling to secure housing, to access child care, and to find mental health and substance use supports when they need them. We are urging the Province to work with us on practical, sustained solutions that restore stability, dignity, and hope for the people of the Nipissing District.”

Northern Pressures and New Evidence

Northern Ontario continues to experience the impacts of mental health challenges, homelessness, substance use, and community pressures at disproportionately higher rates compared to the rest of the Province. DNSSAB is also drawing attention to two recently released research reports that underscore these realities:

- [Protecting Northern Ontario for 1.3 Cents on the Dollar](#) – A report prepared by the Northern Ontario Service Deliverers Association (NOSDA), the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), and HelpSeeker Technologies, examining Northern Ontario’s economic base and the growing social pressures driving homelessness and

unmet mental health and substance use needs. It documents higher rates of homelessness and mental health/substance use related harms that are straining emergency and community systems.

- [Municipalities Under Pressure: One Year Later – An Update on the Human and Financial Cost of Ontario's Homelessness Crisis](#) – A province-wide homelessness update jointly released by the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO), the Northern Ontario Service Deliverers Association (NOSDA), and the Ontario Municipal Social Services Association (OMSSA), in partnership with HelpSeeker Technologies. The report confirms that homelessness continues to grow across Ontario, with Northern communities experiencing the steepest increases, the highest costs, and the deepest gaps in available housing and support services.

Together, these reports highlight that without sustained, Northern-focused provincial funding, areas like Nipissing will continue to face escalating pressures across housing, health, and social support systems.

About DNSSAB:

The District of Nipissing Social Services Administration Board (DNSSAB) is the service delivery agency for essential human services to the residents of the Nipissing District. These include Ontario Works, Housing Services, Children's Services, and Paramedic Services. The jurisdiction of the DNSSAB covers a population of about 85,000 people, spread out over 17,000 square kilometres, 11 municipalities, two First Nations, and two unorganized areas – Nipissing North and Nipissing South. The Board is made up of 11 Municipal councillors and one elected representative for the Townships Without Municipal Organization. The Board members exercise powers, duties and responsibilities relating to the delivery of human services, while respecting the DSSAB Act and the Board's Procedural By-Laws and governance model. Shared responsibilities with the Province and municipalities are combined within the DNSSAB.

Learn more at dnssab.ca

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