

2022-2042

STRATEGIC PLAN

VISION

Healthy, Sustainable Communities.

MISSION

*Support accessible human services
in Nipissing District.*

District of Nipissing
Social Services
Administration Board



Conseil d'administration
des services sociaux
du district de Nipissing

INTRODUCTION

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 EMS/Land Ambulance. The jurisdiction of the DNSSAB covers a population of about 85,000 people, spread out over 17,000 square kilometers, 11 municipalities, two First Nations, and two unorganized areas – Nipissing North and Nipissing South. The Board is made up of 11 Municipal councillors and 1 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.

The strategic planning process is critical to establish and reaffirm the organizational vision, mission, goals, values, and priorities going forward. With the previous plan expiring in 2020, and the onset of the global pandemic around the same time, it has become doubly important to re-establish the corporate goals and priorities to provide direction into the future.

The 2022-2042 Strategic Plan sets a long-term horizon for achieving the corporate goals while the Board priorities are revisited every four years in step with the Board's governance term. The plan will be particularly important for guiding the Board and staff as they continue adapting to the evolving COVID-19 pandemic and serving Nipissing residents and communities through the post-pandemic and into full recovery.

PLAN DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

The strategic plan is largely internally driven with input from the Board of Directors and staff. One-on-one meetings were conducted with Board members who provided input on the corporate vision and mission, and the area of focus, or goals to achieve, over a 20-year time horizon. This exercise led to the confirmation of the corporate vision and mission and the development of four over-arching 'stretch' goals. Three of the goals face outwards to clients and the community while the other faces inwards to organizational growth and development. The goals will help successive Boards stay focused on the 'big-picture' outcomes and results that matter over the long run. The Board's priorities for the remainder of the term were also established, and current and future challenges and opportunities were noted.

Interviews were also held with members of the senior management team to develop strategic priorities and actions by program area and department. The development of these priorities was back-dropped with the corporate vision, mission, goals (above), and the results from the SWOT focus group sessions (below). The department and Board priorities were then aligned to establish 10 common strategic priorities for the organization, along with specific action items by department where relevant.

The DNSSAB staff were also engaged in the planning process through a number of SWOT focus groups that were held across all departments. The sessions helped to identify organizational strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, and gain an understanding of the current

operating environment and situation. The SWOT results have informed the plan through alignment with the priorities, and the development of action items and projects to be implemented in support of the strategic priorities and corporate goals.

The draft strategic plan was also shared with two external planning tables with broad community representation, for input and feedback.

PLANNING FRAMEWORK AND IMPLEMENTATION

The corporate strategic plan occupies a central role in the organization’s planning framework and integrates the Board’s vision and goals with other strategic service plans, priorities/ strategies, and the annual budget plan:



Going forward, as the department plans are renewed and/or operating work plans and projects are developed, they will be adjusted and aligned with the corporate plan to work towards achieving the common priorities and goals. This will also ensure there is a strong connection between the functional, service-level strategies, work plans and operational resources, and the corporate vision and longer-term goals.

The strategic plan will be implemented by the senior management team with support from staff and department operating units. Implementation activities and details will be developed and carried out at the functional, operations level where there is a greater emphasis on tactical details and managing projects and activities, and allocating resources. Additionally, as mentioned above, alignment with department-level service plans and projects will further advance the plan in working towards achieving a common purpose. In terms of achieving the priorities and goals, the plan’s progress will be measured through various indicators and outcomes, and incorporated into the Business Intelligence system and linked to the performance management system.

THE OPERATING ENVIRONMENT

Along with the rest of the world, the DNSSAB’s operating environment has been significantly impacted and altered by the global pandemic. Lockdowns, quarantines, public health restrictions, school and childcare closures, and remote work to name a few, have affected DNSSAB operations, clients, and community residents in some way.

Not surprisingly then, the pandemic has also influenced the strategic plan which was developed over the same period as the pandemic. The pandemic and COVID surfaced in all strategy discussions and meetings in varying contexts. On the positive side, responding to the pandemic has demonstrated how flexible and adaptive the DNSSAB is in reacting to sudden change and crisis situations, while maintaining core services and operations. The pandemic also amplified the importance of the work the organization does, along with its community partners and other service providers.

On the negative side, the pandemic has further exposed the vulnerabilities of clients and those who are marginalized and/or working in lower-paying jobs. In many cases, the needs of these vulnerable populations have gone unmet as some community programs and services were forced to close and became unavailable during the pandemic. Uncertainty around future waves of the pandemic and health concerns continues.

In view of the pandemic effects above, the DNSSAB's operating environment presents further challenges and opportunities at this juncture of strategic plan development – these are summarized below:

Challenges:

- Reduced funding in the future and a change in funding models (possibly impacting the municipal levy) as government budgets tighten up to pay for COVID.
- Recognizing the long-term economic and fiscal realities of the pandemic and the impact this will have on the DNSSAB and local communities.
- Continuing supply chain issues and rising prices, making things even more unaffordable for low-income families and households.
- A persistent job gap where jobs are going unfilled but people are also out of work.
- Changing demographics and the increasing complexity and needs of clients could put further pressure on service levels and delivery.
- Service gaps and a lack of certain community supports negatively affect business operations and client outcomes. Examples include insufficient health supports (e.g. doctors) for clients with mental health issues, social housing units that are unattached to services and supports, and Landlord and Tenant Board backlogs.
- Service and program impacts such as the ageing social housing stock, expiring operating agreements (social housing providers), and childcare centres operating below capacity will increase the waiting lists for these services.
- Potentially negative outcomes and unintended consequences resulting from the provincial transformation of Ontario Works and Employment Ontario.

Opportunities

- Respond to government funding applications and infrastructure investment quickly by having housing development projects in advanced planning stages and shovel-ready.
- Increase public communications to keep residents informed of DNSSAB activities, projects, etc., and advocacy on behalf of the district's vulnerable population.

- Investigate service system navigation for homelessness, mental health, and addictions in more depth to ensure that clients are accessing the services and supports that are available, and by the appropriate service provider.
- Employ new technology and software to update old systems and databases and improve business functions, communications, and service delivery (see point below, also).
- Improve service delivery through methods such as new technology (e.g. providing clients with virtual service options), meeting clients ‘where they are at’, community outreach, new programming, and alternative EMS transportation for non-urgent patient transfers.
- Formalize service collaboration with community partners in certain sectors to improve client and community outcomes; seek out new partnerships to leverage resources for a specific purpose (e.g. to access funding) or in new sectors to provide alternative or different programming.
- Transition to a hybrid-working model that combines working in the office and remotely.
- Further develop staff through team-building activities; role-transition support; and targeted training and familiarization in specific program areas.

In addition to the above challenges and opportunities in the operating environment, change and transition are imminent in two specific program areas that will fundamentally change the strategic direction of the Board in these areas: social assistance transformation and the direct delivery of land ambulance, which are described below.

Social Assistance Transformation

The provincial government is currently undertaking social assistance reform to improve employment outcomes and accountability. The transformation will include the government taking on more program administration and centralizing service system management for employment, by geographic regions. Additionally, OW and ODSP employment programs will be combined into Employment Ontario. The transformation is expected to have a fundamental impact on the DNSSAB and OW operations starting in 2023.

Nipissing EMS/ Paramedic Services Direct Delivery

The Board has made the decision to switch from contracted land ambulance services to direct delivery and oversight to become more adaptive and responsive to community needs and improve service levels. This transition involves transferring 100 paramedics into the organization along with the ambulance operations and administrative functions. While the transition will occur during 2022, the business impact and effects will extend out beyond this for the next couple of years.

These are major change initiatives on their own, which will start taking place early on in the strategic plan’s implementation. Thus, many of the OW and EMS priorities and activities that emerge or are in the plan will be in response to these initiatives.

VISION & MISSION

VISION

Healthy, Sustainable Communities.

Healthy, sustainable communities where residents have social, economic and environmental conditions and opportunities that enable them to develop to their maximum potential. Residents access the resources they need to maintain or increase their physical, emotional and social well-being and engage fully in life.

MISSION

Support accessible human services in Nipissing District.

The mission reflects the Board's ultimate purpose and reason for being and provides a pathway for achieving the vision.

VALUES

The Board's values represent the core beliefs and principles of Board members and staff. These guide their behavior and decisions and are front and centre in the daily activities and interactions with clients and other stakeholders.



Putting People First

We base our relationships on a foundation of respect, dignity, and fairness. We celebrate diversity, embrace inclusion, and recognize the strengths of others.



Pro-Active

We assume an active role, anticipate future needs, and focus on prevention.



Collaboration

We are committed to working co-operatively to maximize engagement and achieve common goals.



Empowerment

Each of us has the power to influence and make decisions that will positively affect outcomes.



Innovation

We are committed to encouraging confidence, inspiring original ideas, innovative services, and creative solutions.



Inclusion & Diversity

We are committed to providing services and a workplace that is inclusive and diverse.

20-YEAR GOALS

The Board's goals represent the desired outcomes and core areas of focus to fulfill the vision. The goals transcend multiple Board terms with a timeless focus over the next 20 years and are resilient to changes or shocks to the political, social, and economic systems and operating environments.

Maximize Human Service Impact

Clients and residents have the highest possible quality of life and well-being.



Remove Systemic Barriers

Systemic social issues, disparities, and inequalities are addressed and eliminated.



Seamless Access

Clients and residents have direct access to programs, services, or other resources when and where they are needed.



Continuous Improvement and Adaptation - Learning & Growth

The Board's services are strong and maximize investment.

Maximize Human Service Impact

The Board will leverage its leadership and bring together internal and external stakeholders, in an effort to realize common goals and maximize collective resources for the betterment of people in Nipissing District.

Remove Systemic Barriers

Through a focus on the vulnerable population, the Board will advocate for affordable housing, and support the removal of persisting social barriers such as access to quality child care programs, homelessness, poor mental health, addictions, and poverty, which threaten an individual's well-being and community participation. The related disparities

and inequalities in income, education, socioeconomic status, and health are examples of barriers to individual well-being and healthy communities.

Seamless Access

Enhance service planning, delivery, and access so clients and residents can access programs and services when and where they need them.

Continuous Improvement and Adaptation – Learning and Growth

Taking a continuous improvement approach will lead to processes and operating methods that are efficient and effective, with high-quality service delivery. The complementary focus on internal learning, growth, and adaptability enhances employee and technology capabilities and strengths.

PRIORITIES (2022-2023)

The strategic priorities establish a clear avenue to enable the organization in meeting its goals. The priorities are subject to change with each Board term on a four-year cycle. Along with the priorities are a set of action items related to each priority and determined through consultations with the Board, staff, and individual departments. In some cases, the action items presented are common across the organization and each department will have various sub-actions specific to their program. In other cases, the actions are more department-specific. Additionally, departments have completed strategic planning at the department level and have developed action items that align to the corporate priorities, at greater levels of detail. The high-level elements from these department plans have been incorporated into the corporate strategic plan. The intended outcomes for the respective priorities and action items are also presented along with the general areas of performance measurement and an example of qualitative and quantitative indicators.

Maximize Human Service Impact

Strengthen and Expand Partnerships, Collaboration, and Opportunities for Internal and External Service Integration: *implement strategies to combine/ share administrative and/or operational service activities to better meet the needs of clients and residents, and improve their service experience and outcomes.*

Action	Outcome	Area of Performance /Indicators
Formalize the sharing of information, service coordination and collaboration, and direct client referrals with select service providers (with a specific focus on the health sector).	Improved client outcomes through interagency collaboration to address service system gaps/ duplication.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased coordination, collaboration, and service sharing to achieve a common goal. • The service gaps and duplications that have been eliminated.
Enhance current relationships and/or build new ones to leverage resources and projects for specific priorities or joint planning and service delivery initiatives (e.g. providing wrap-around services or new programming).	Increased community resources for a common purpose.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnership Relationship Strength Index. • Resource/ project leverage ratio.

Action	Outcome	Area of Performance/ Indicator
Examine ways to increase cross-team and department collaboration to encourage multi-functional teams and reduce internal silos.	Internal silos are reduced, and departments and staff share knowledge, resources, and a common purpose and goals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inter-agency collaboration survey. • Network analysis indicators.
Seek opportunities to integrate EMS and health into other DNSSAB departments and community programs.	Client and resident needs are identified and addressed through paramedic connection with vulnerable populations and evolving community needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of calls resulting in referrals to DNSSAB and community services and programs.

Remove Systemic Barriers

House Those in Need: *stabilize households by focusing on the upstream social determinants and creating more affordable housing options for those who are vulnerable and in need.*

Action	Outcome	Area of Performance/ Indicator
Explore opportunities to utilize available land through the Nipissing District Housing Corporation to create additional affordable and subsidized housing.	NDHC land assets are maximized to increase the housing supply.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land utilization ratio. • Service level standards.
Investigate ways to get some of NDHC's social housing units attached to housing and clinical mental health supports, or designated as supported living.	Social housing tenants receive the supports they require to maintain housing stability and move towards self-sufficiency.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental health-related incidents/ calls. • Eviction rate.
Explore municipal-owned land opportunities for the construction of new affordable housing units through joint planning.	Increase the supply of affordable housing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipal land conversion rate. • Increased affordable housing density in select areas.

Identify housing development projects and prepare business cases in advance to respond quickly to funding opportunities, applications, and provincial infrastructure investments.	The affordable and subsidized housing supply is increased to meet the demand.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centralized housing waiting list demand. • Application response and success rates.
Implement a Coordinated Access system for homelessness and ancillary services.	To prevent and end homelessness through a streamlined and standardized housing intake and assessment process. Homeless serving agencies are coordinating access and sharing case information and data.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of clients housed. • Percentage of clients who remain consecutively housed (e.g. 6+ months). • Number of re-housing occurrences.
Ensure the By-Name List of homeless individuals is tied to a group of community service providers who will meet regularly and find coordinated solutions to rapidly rehouse and provide supports to individuals identified.	Homeless individuals are rapidly housed and supported.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By-name list exits. • Average time an individual is deemed homeless; time-to-housing. • Shelter overflow rate.

Enable Client Self-sufficiency and Decrease the Reliance on Social Assistance: *enable Ontario Works clients to move towards employment, education, income security, and independence and away from social assistance and dependency on the system.*

Action	Outcome	Area of Performance/ Indicator
Stronger OW program alignment with life skills and literacy initiatives; ensure maximum client participation.	Life stabilization clients without basic skills and education can find employment and financial independence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caseload exits. • Recidivism rates; reasons for return. • Job retention rate.

Increase Equitable Access to Quality Early Learning and Child Care:

remove barriers such as affordability and geographic location to ensure all families have equitable access to child care and fee subsidies.

Action	Outcome	Area of Performance/ Indicator
Assess financial supports available to service providers to ensure affordable and sustainable licensed child care options are available to families across the district.	Quality early learning and child care is affordable for all families.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child care affordability measures (e.g. percentage/ share of family income or wage spent on child care).
Implement a strategy to support rural underserved communities throughout the district (i.e. EarlyON Mobile Unit).	Families living in rural and under-served communities have access to quality early learning and child care.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased rural child care participation rate. Increased population share of children ages 0-12.

Seamless Access

Understand and Define Service Access throughout Nipissing District:

assess the present service network for DNSSAB clients and residents regarding linkage and equitable access to the services, benefits, and resources they need.

Action	Outcome	Area of Performance/ Indicator
Identify and explore opportunities for co-location of services as part of establishing wrap-around services for clients.	Clients are receiving all the services and supports they require through a central access point.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wraparound model assessment/ program evaluation. Recidivism rates.
Investigate opportunities to provide outreach services to clients and meet them in their own space/ 'where they are at'.	Increase contact with clients in their environment and improve the continuum of service delivery and care.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outreach penetration rate. Outreach outcome rate.
Identify and remove any gaps in service delivery.	Individuals and families have equitable access to DNSSAB's programs, supports, and services across Nipissing District.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Client satisfaction surveys for services offered.

Enhance Service Planning and Delivery: *taking an evidence-based and client-centred approach, improve service planning in certain areas and consider changing current delivery methods and/or providing additional services and programming to meet client needs and expectations.*

Action	Outcome	Area of Performance/ Indicator
Streamline processes to reduce both internal and external administrative burden by automating reporting requirements, increasing efficiency, and maintaining conformance and accountabilities (i.e. database: reporting requirements, funding applications, funding allocations, etc.).	Reporting requirements are streamlined, efficient, and can be easily accessed and completed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process improvement metrics (efficiency, effectiveness, etc.).
Develop a mechanism to ensure that the organization is committed, and adheres to, the various policies and procedures as an important risk management tool.	Risks to the organization are mitigated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of policies and procedures. • Percentage of staff that have signed off on all policies. • Number of policy violations.
Improve data-driven approach and analytics consistency across all departments, to enhance service system planning, program delivery, and improve outcome measurements.	Advanced data collection and analysis in all departments that supports evidence-based decision-making.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data consumption/ utilization (data sets, dashboards, etc.). • Decision-makers/ end-user satisfaction with the data and analysis.
Prioritize the policy agenda, and advocate with the provincial and federal government to promote and increase awareness of the local, northern and provincial needs concerning housing and homelessness, employment and social assistance, early years and child care, and emergency medical services.	Represent resident's interests, influence policy development, and ensure program sustainability and success.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional funding secured. • Number of advocacy activities. • Successful policy/ program change (legislation, bills passed, etc.).
Establish program sustainability for the Nipissing Community Paramedicine (CP) program.	Nipissing residents and communities receive permanent community paramedicine services and care.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CP program costs; return. • Number of CP calls; 911 deferrals; home visits; referrals to service providers.

Continuous Improvement and Adaptation – Learning and Growth

Become an Employer of Choice: *create a strong workplace culture that will attract and retain skilled talent.*

Action	Outcome	Area of Performance/ Indicator
Develop a recruitment, retention, and succession strategy to alleviate unfilled vacancies, increased workloads, and capacity issues.	DNSSAB recruits and retains skilled staff and has a clear succession plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff turnover rate; retention rate. • Length of service. • Average length of time to fill positions.
Seek opportunities for staff to participate in career and skill development to further enhance opportunities for the internal filling and succession of positions (see also, Encourage Career Development and Growth).	The organization promotes skill development and growth for career development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certifications and accreditations. • Skill development hours /rate. • Internal/ external hiring ratio.
Ensure that work processes are well documented and accessible to assist with succession planning efforts.	Minimize the loss of knowledge through retirement and staff turnover.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inventory of workload processes.
Attract, retain and increase the number of Registered Early Childhood Educators and professionals working in the child care sector.	The number of Registered Early Childhood Educators is meeting child care demand.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ECE turnover rate; retention rate.
Investigate the pros and cons of employing NDHC housing maintenance contractors directly versus the current practice of hiring them externally.	NDHC housing maintenance and repair is carried out most effectively and at the best value.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Costs and benefits of outsourcing vs. insourcing contractors.

Measure DNSSAB's workplace environment and culture to evaluate the current level.	Create a baseline for measuring progress on achieving this priority.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mix of quantitative & qualitative data. • InfoHR database indicators. • Staff experience feedback (surveys, focus groups, etc.).
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Encourage Career Development and Growth: *implement development and training activities to promote continuous learning and skills development in concert with business needs, for growth and improved performance.*

Action	Outcome	Area of Performance/ Indicator
Investigate developing a type of cross-department familiarization program where participating staff become familiar with other job roles and skill sets, in other departments.	Workforce development, increase in organizational awareness, reduced work silos.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operating expenditures that are out-sourced.
Increase team-building activities within and across departments.	Improve corporate culture, communications, cooperation, and collaboration.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compare to baseline business metrics after implementation. • Staff feedback (surveys, focus groups).
Remove participation barriers by increasing awareness of professional learning opportunities and making them accessible in various formats (i.e. videos, teleconference/videoconference, online modules, etc.)	The organization offers a wide array of professional learning opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation rates in professional learning opportunities.
Ensure that staff have sufficient time allotted to attend training and professional development events and activities.	Continuous learning, career development, and growth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training hours. • Training participation rates.

Develop Advanced Technology Solutions: *implement new technology to increase productivity, operating performance and outcome data and measurement, and enhance service delivery.*

Action	Outcome	Area of Performance/ Indicator
Achieve an organization-wide commitment to technology that includes developing a technology inventory and identifying and prioritizing new technology and/or legacy system upgrades and modernization.	Increased business process efficiency, program metrics, staff productivity, and client experience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget/ resource amount allocated to technology. • Return on technology. • Digital /technology adoption rate.
Prioritize and implement the following new software and databases and/or upgrade legacy systems: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tenant Management System • Housing Registry Waitlist System • Social Housing Management System 	Improved data accessibility, reliability, consistency, security, BI integration, decision support, and reporting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time to market (from concept to launch). • Uptime. • Help Desk requests (pre and post).
Investigate implementing new technologies to improve client and resident experience: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide clients with virtual service options such as live chat functions and virtual connections to health care and other service providers. • Develop a client portal for online applications and document submission, etc. • Provide public computers/ information kiosks at select locations for clients and the general public. 	Improve client and resident experiences; enhance service delivery and seamless access to services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Client satisfaction rate. • Service channel utilization. • User engagement levels. • Number of unique clients, visitors.
Fully utilize SharePoint or investigate a new document management system.	Documents, information, and data are located in a secure, central location for ease of reference, retrieval, and merging files.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SharePoint site stats (usage, uploads, downloads, adoption, etc.) • Staff satisfaction.
Secure and protect computer systems and networks from cyber attacks that could result in the breach of corporate and client information and data.	Corporate and client information and data are secure from a data breach.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of cyber attacks received and prevented.
Explore opportunities to generate savings through NDHC deep energy retrofits.	A reduction in the total cost of building ownership.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building performance. • Energy use minimization.

Strengthen Communications and Public Relations: *engage and inform stakeholders to improve communications, inform public policy, build education and awareness, and strengthen the corporate reputation and image.*

Action	Outcome	Area of Performance/ Indicator
Increase public communications and relations focusing on what the DNSSAB does and its accomplishments (include anti-stigma messaging).	Increased public education and awareness around DNSSAB.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media coverage; reach. • Sentiment analysis. • Website traffic.
Implement strategies to engage early years and child care professionals by creating an online community of practice (i.e. forum, networking, etc.).	Early years and child care professionals are connected and further able to collaborate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement rate and levels of early years and child care professionals.
Run a communications campaign to position EMS and Nipissing paramedics as an integral part of the community.	Increased public education and awareness around Nipissing paramedic services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media coverage; reach. • Brand awareness. • Social media indicators. • Website traffic.