

BRIEFING NOTE HS04-22

For Information or For Approval

Date: January 26, 2022

Purpose: **Social Services Relief Fund Phase 3 (SSRF P3) - Rent Relief Project Update**

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This report provides details on the Rent Relief Project funded through the SSRF P3, and is provided for information purposes.

BACKGROUND:

On March 10, 2021 the District of Nipissing Social Services Administration Board (DNSSAB) received notification from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing that the province had allocated an additional \$2,611,180 under the SSRF P3 funding for use from March 1, 2021 to December 31, 2021. This funding was intended to mitigate the continued impact of the pandemic on the homelessness sector, and supports operating expenses only.

The intention of SSRF P3 was to continue to help a diverse range of vulnerable people to meet their short-term critical needs, including people living in community housing, supportive housing, people with low incomes, social assistance recipients, or others who require social services support as well as those that are experiencing homelessness.

The SSRF P3 funding had the same four eligible service categories found under CHPI: Emergency Shelter Solutions, Housing and Related Supports, Other Services and Supports and Homelessness Prevention. In recognition of the number of households that were financially impacted by the pandemic, a specific sub-category: Homelessness Prevention - Rent Relief; was also added.

CURRENT STATUS/STEPS TAKEN TO DATE:

In April 2021 a presentation was made to the DNSSAB concerning a collaboration between Low Income People Involvement (LIPI) and the Near North Landlord Association (NNLA) that was in response to concerns about the ending of the eviction moratorium and the growing number of tenants who were in substantial arrears and at risk of homelessness. The collaboration would

offer a three-party option for dealing with the arrears while keeping tenants housed: One third of the arrears would be paid through LIPI; one third would be the responsibility of the tenant; and one third would be forgiven by the landlord. The model would be voluntary and dependent of the need and the willingness of tenants and landlords to commit to the processes.

The project was designed to decrease evictions with Rent Bank Agreements between tenants and Landlords, wherein the Landlord will agree to cease eviction proceedings and sign an in-kind contribution agreement for household rental arrears, and the tenant will agree to do the following:

- (i) Participate in a Brief Intervention Trusteeship,
- (ii) Agree to a repayment plan,
- (iii) Enrol in the rent share program;
- (iv) pay upfront upcoming rent and/or first repayment obligation

The Rent Relief project with LIPI as the lead and in partnership with the NNLA, was funded in July 2021 through the SSRF P3. As of December 31, 2021, 18 households, comprised of 19 children and youth and 23 adults, were stabilized through this project. Rental arrears of \$69,059.73 were paid out and all households were in agreement with being part of the project, including trusteeship and direct payment of rent. As of As of December 31, 2021, repayments of \$3,500 have been recovered.

Support provided	Number of Individuals	Number of Households	Funding Expensed
Homelessness Prevention Support	42	18	\$37,380.00
Stabilization of Core Housing	42	18	\$69,059.73
Total expensed to December 31, 2021			\$106,439.73

As a result of the Rent Relief project, a new protocol has been developed between the DNSSAB CHPI program, OW and ODSP Income support services and LIPI. All rent arrears applications are first triaged by LIPI, allowing for more collaboration between services and coordination of limited Homelessness Prevention resources.

Final reporting for the project, including outcomes and data, scheduled to be completed in March of 2022, will be built into a final SSRF P3 report and will also include the other nine community projects.

RESOURCES REQUIRED:

The late start of the project and the changing dates for the end of pandemic income relief funding and eviction moratoriums resulted in an uptake that was lower than anticipated. The pandemic has continued to lead to pressures in other operational areas. The provider reached out on November 25, 2021 to advise that the Global Emergency Homelessness Fund (GEHF) had been exhausted, and more funds would be required to continue providing assistance to March 31st, 2022. Upon review of the expenditures under the various funding pockets, it was determined that the provider will be given the flexibility to move the remaining \$100,137.00 in surplus funds as follows:

Program	Surplus (Deficit) as December 31, 2021	Reallocated, to be spent by March 31, 2022
Global Emergency Homelessness Fund (GEHF)	(\$14,504.91)	\$75,000
Rent Arrears	\$7,606.04	\$20,000
Utility Arrears	\$17,035.87	\$5,137.00
Total	\$100,137	\$100,137

CONCLUSION:

The pandemic continues to impact housing stability and shelter capacity. The SSRF P3 funding ended on December 31, 2021.

In October 2021, the Nipissing Counts Homelessness enumeration found that 15% (31 people) of respondents experiencing homelessness indicated that their most recent housing loss was related to the pandemic.