



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DNSSAB Launches Enhanced Cold Weather Response for Winter 2025/26

Expanded Shelter Capacity, Outreach, and Emergency Measures Aim to Protect Unsheltered Residents Across Nipissing District

North Bay, ON: The District of Nipissing Social Services Administration Board (DNSSAB) is implementing an enhanced cold weather response plan for the 2025/26 winter season to support residents living unsheltered across the District. Working in partnership with contracted agencies and the Community Advisory Board (CAB), DNSSAB is focused on ensuring accessible services and accommodations are available during the coldest months of the year.

Cold Weather Funding and Response Planning

Following an increase in base funding through the federal Reaching Home initiative in late 2024, DNSSAB, guided by the CAB, allocated resources to enhance cold weather planning, expand shelter overflow capacity in North Bay and West Nipissing, and expand outreach supports. In 2025/26, the CAB is recommending similar initiatives, and DNSSAB will work with its partners to implement this recommendation.

Should further funding become available, DNSSAB and its partners will be prepared to expand supports further.

Shelter Expansion and Transitional Housing

At Northern Pines, located at 590 Chippewa Street, North Bay, expansion and retrofitting of the existing portables on site is underway to provide 24/7 shelter and supports for 21 individuals living unsheltered. Although the Low Barrier Shelter project was originally scheduled for completion on November 1, 2025, the opening of the 24/7 shelter with supports is now anticipated to occur after November 1. In the meantime, the current 24/7 services offered in Phase 3 of Northern Pines, will continue uninterrupted.

Once expansion of the Low Barrier Shelter is complete, the total bed count for winter 2025/26 will increase to 81, compared to 70 last winter. In addition, hours for the

current Low Barrier Shelter will be temporarily expanded from November 1, 2025, to March 31, 2026, ensuring continuous 24/7 shelter and housing supports throughout the winter. Crisis Centre North Bay continues exploring ways to extend shelter access and amenities, such as showers, during colder months.

District-Wide Emergency Shelter Protocol

The District-Wide Emergency Shelter Triaging Protocol, developed in 2024, remains active across the Nipissing District. The protocol allows individuals in outlying areas to be triaged by phone through Crisis Centre staff, with transportation arranged to North Bay and back when shelter beds are available. This helps ensure consistent access to emergency shelter for residents in smaller or remote communities.

Outreach and Health Supports

DNSSAB's coordinated outreach network continues to connect with residents living unsheltered or in encampments, linking them to shelter, health care, and community supports.

True Self – Debwewendizwin provides District-wide outreach services that will continue to operate throughout the winter to reduce risks and promote access to available shelter.

The Community Paramedicine (CP) Program provides outreach medical support for those who face challenges such as access barriers, stigma, and inconsistent care, through collaborations with Crisis Centre North Bay and True Self. These efforts will continue through the winter to mitigate health and safety risks for the most vulnerable.

Extreme Cold Weather Protocol

The Shelter Bed Eligibility Policy continues to guide responses during extreme cold weather conditions. When alerts are issued by the North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit based on Environment Canada data, expanded shelter and overflow spaces are made available. Alerts are triggered when the temperature is forecast to reach -15°C or when the wind chill falls to -20°C .

During these alerts, Crisis Centre North Bay triages clients to available shelter beds, overflow or program spaces to ensure no one is turned away.

Emergency Homelessness Response

Low Income People Involvement (LIPI) remains DNSSAB's lead agency for emergency homelessness responses when multiple households are displaced by fires, floods, or building closures. LIPI provides immediate, solution-focused case management in partnership with community agencies, reducing pressure on shelters and ensuring impacted individuals have secure alternatives.

Continued Commitment

DNSSAB remains focused on coordinated cold weather planning and partnerships that ensure no one is left unsheltered during the winter season.

"Making sure no one is left without shelter during the cold winter months is a top priority for our Board," said Mark King, DNSSAB Board Chair. "Through strong community partnerships and expanded emergency measures, DNSSAB remains committed to helping vulnerable residents and providing essential services across the Nipissing District."

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 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.

Learn more about DNSSAB here: www.dnssab.ca

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