

**Ministry of
Municipal Affairs
and Housing**

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April 1, 2020

Mr. Les Gamble
Board Chair
Manitoulin-Sudbury District Services Board
210 Mead Boulevard
Espanola ON P5E 1R9

Dear Board Chair Gamble:

Protecting the health and well-being of all Ontarians is our government's number one priority. Last week, we announced a new, **\$200 million Social Services Relief Fund** in response to the ongoing COVID-19 crisis, a shared initiative between the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing and the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services.

During this unprecedented time, it is vital that we take decisive action to support the most vulnerable in our communities, including people who are homeless or at-risk of becoming homeless, low-income households, social assistance recipients, people without jobs, households who depend on housing supports to maintain stable housing, people whose financial situation is precarious due to the COVID-19 crisis, people who live in community and supportive housing, and people who depend on social services to meet their basic needs.

We are committed to working closely with both our federal and municipal partners to make sure appropriate financial assistance and supports are provided to those most in need due to the COVID-19 crisis. The services you provide are needed now more than ever.

Social Services Relief Fund – Funding for Service Managers

To help you and your partners respond to increased demands for services and supports, my ministry is making an immediate investment of **\$148 million for Service Managers under the Social Services Relief Fund**. The investment will allow communities to expand a wide range of services and supports for vulnerable populations, based on local need, so they can better respond to this emergency situation. This investment complements additional resources provided by the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services to directly support individuals and families in financial crisis who are not able to access federal assistance.

I am pleased to announce, under the Social Services Relief Fund, the Manitoulin-Sudbury District Services Board will be eligible to receive **\$938,400** in 2020-21. To ensure this investment is delivered as quickly as possible and to provide maximum flexibility for local needs, we will be providing funding through the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI).

The current target is during the week of April 6, 2020, you will receive 50 per cent of your Social Services Relief Fund allocation to enable you to immediately respond to the COVID-19 crisis. Please ensure you provide an email to electronically confirm your receipt of this allocation letter and the terms and conditions of the Social Services Relief Fund.

The first payment is not conditional on your execution of the sign back below. You may send your email confirmation to:

Jim Adams, Director of the Housing Programs Branch
Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing
jim.e.adams@ontario.ca

In recognition of the costs you are facing, funding provided under the Social Services Relief Fund may be used to offset eligible costs incurred on or after March 1, 2020.

I would like to stress that this expanded funding is intended to allow you to help a diverse range of vulnerable people in need in your community. This includes 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.

Please note that this funding is in addition to your base 2020-21 CHPI allocation that the ministry previously communicated to you on April 17, 2019. There will be no change to the program administration or payment process for these regular payments under CHPI. Your first 2020-21 quarterly payment under CHPI will be advanced based on the amount you requested in your initial Investment Plan.

As this emergency situation evolves, my ministry will continue to evaluate local needs and respond accordingly. Where necessary, the balance of your Social Services Relief Fund allocation may be subject to reallocation or adjustment. Any changes will be communicated to you as soon as possible.

Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI)

CHPI is a 100 per cent provincially-funded program that aims to prevent and end homelessness by improving access to adequate, suitable, and affordable housing and homelessness services for people experiencing homelessness and for people at-risk of homelessness. The 2020-21 program allocation is \$338.7 million, an increase of \$15 million over 2019-20.

Under CHPI, Service Managers are given the flexibility to design proactive programs based on local needs and priorities.

Service Managers may deliver programs under four broad service categories:

- Emergency Shelter Solutions: for people who are experiencing homelessness or in-crisis;
- Housing with Related Supports: may include long-term housing and transitional housing with supports;
- Services and Supports: services such as street outreach, case management, and transportation; and
- Homelessness Prevention: including rent and utility banks, emergency financial assistance and/or education programs to help people stay in their homes.

Social Services Relief Fund – Funding to Service Managers – Program Details

Additional funding being provided under the Social Services Relief Fund through CHPI will help municipalities and social service providers such as shelters, food banks, emergency services, community and supportive housing providers, charities and non-profits continue to deliver their critical services, hire additional staff, and find ways to promote social distancing and self-isolation to keep people safe and healthy.

Service Managers will determine local needs and distribute the funding, ensuring people are receiving the support they need. Service Managers will have the flexibility to determine how best to use this funding to respond to the need of vulnerable people during this COVID-19 crisis. For instance, we know that in the coming months, many tenants will have challenges paying rent. Service Managers could direct funding to enhance rent bank that are already in operation.

At this time, it is critical for Service Managers to ensure Indigenous peoples are supported. You are encouraged to consider Indigenous homeless shelters and Indigenous organizations through the use of your Social Services Relief Fund allocation.

In the homeless service system, funding provided under the Social Services Relief Fund through CHPI could be used towards initiatives like:

- Building homeless shelter capacity (not including capital expenditures);
- Use of motels or hotels;
- Housing allowances;
- Transportation costs;
- Food and supplies;
- Enhanced cleaning services;
- Non-medical staffing requirements (e.g., enhanced outreach services); and
- Protective equipment.

Funding may also be used in community housing and supportive housing to assist with housing costs for in-situ tenants; protective equipment; and the provision of food and supplies for households in quarantine and/or isolation.

More broadly, this funding could be used towards initiatives delivered through local service agencies like:

- Rent bank and emergency energy funds
- Food banks and grocery gift cards
- Community outreach to support seniors in self-isolation
- Transportation for low-income individuals to get to and from medical appointments

Funding will flow through the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative Program Guidelines and reporting structures to ensure that this investment can be used for all types of social and housing services. For funding provided under the Social Services Relief Fund only, the requirements set out in the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative Program Guidelines are modified as set out in Appendix A to this letter.

Despite section 6 of the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative Service Manager Agreement, no Investment Plan is required for funding provided under the Social Services Relief Fund.

Due to the nature of the current public health crisis and the need to support a wide range of vulnerable individuals and families, Service Managers are encouraged to employ a broad interpretation of those populations that this funding is meant to serve not limited to those who are homeless to include those facing financially precarious situations due to COVID-19, or any individual in need of social services.

We know that service providers and other organizations across the housing, healthcare and social services sectors are experiencing very pressing challenges during this crisis. We strongly encourage Service Managers to work closely with their partners across sectors to determine how best to support vulnerable people in their community with this flexible funding.

Please see the attached Questions and Answers document for more information.

Federal Support

In addition to Ontario's investment, the federal government has announced it is doubling its homelessness funding under their Reaching Home program to respond to COVID-19 related need. This funding will be available to 22 Service Manager areas through their Designated Communities fund and to three other Service Manager areas through their Indigenous Homelessness fund.

We are working closely with the federal government to ensure these Service Managers get the funding they need quickly. For Service Managers that do not receive funding under the Reaching Home program, our provincial investment is there to assist all communities across Ontario.

Our government is also working closely with all Service Managers to implement the Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit program, which will begin in April 2020. Planning

allocations were announced in December 2019 and official application forms will be provided to Service Managers shortly. I encourage all Service Managers to utilize funding under this program to the fullest extent to support vulnerable households as part of your response to the COVID-19 crisis.

As always, I am pleased that our government is able to continue to support the important work you do to improve the lives of our most vulnerable residents. In these challenging times, I look forward to continuing our work together as we serve the people of Ontario.

Yours truly,



The Honourable Steve Clark
Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing

- c. Mr. Fern Dominelli, Chief Administrative Officer, Manitoulin-Sudbury District Services Board

Enclosure

The Parties agree to use funds from the Social Services Relief Fund as set out in the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative Program Guidelines (April 2017), under the Service Manager Service Agreement, with the exceptions noted in Attachment A to this letter.

Service Manager: _____

Name:
Title:

Date

Name:
Title:

Date:

I/We have authority to bind the organization.

Appendix “A”

Notice of Amendment to the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI) Program Guidelines (April 2017), under the Service Manager Service Agreement effective January 1, 2013 (Service Agreement).

Pursuant to Article 8 of your Service Agreement, the ministry is amending the CHPI Program Guidelines. The amendments described below apply only in relation to the funding provided under the Social Services Relief Fund (the “Funding”) and for the fiscal year 2020-21.

The CHPI Program Guidelines are modified as set out below. All other requirements under the CHPI Program Guidelines remain unamended and in full force.

1. Investment Plan

There is no requirement to submit an updated Investment Plan for Funding provided under the Social Services Relief Fund.

2. Funding

The Funding may be used to offset eligible costs incurred on or after March 1, 2020.

Service Manager Funding allocation is based on the CHPI funding model with consideration for funding received in a Service Manager area under the federal Reaching Home program.

3. Payments

Payments will be based on the following: 50 per cent of the Service Manager’s Social Services Relief Funding allocation to be paid in early April 2020; 25 per cent of the Service Manager’s Social Service Relief Funding allocation to be paid in early July 2020. Payments for Quarter 3 and Quarter 4 will be based on projected and actual expenditures as reflected in the Service Manager’s Quarter 1 and Mid-Year report.

4. Housing Allowances and Minor Home Repairs

Service Managers are not required to submit a business case to use the Funding for housing allowances or minor home repairs.

5. Reporting

Service Managers must report their actual Quarter 1 expenditures under the four service categories and projected Quarter 2 to Quarter 4 spending through a Quarter 1 report back due on or before July 15, 2020.

Reporting under the Funding will be separate from the reporting on base CHPI funding.

6. Reallocation

The ministry reserves the right to reallocate Funding at its sole discretion after the end of Quarter 2 based on a review of Service Manager's progress towards the Social Services Relief Fund Funding allocation.