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| Report To: | Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB |
| From: | Fern Dominelli, CAO |
| Date: | April 26, 2012 |
| Re: | Impact of Provincial Budget |

Ontario Works

The province has announced that there will be no general rate increase in 2012 for the Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program. In the past 2 years the province had increased rates by 1%.

Community Start-Up and Maintenance Benefit (CSUMB)

Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB 2011 Expenditure's **\$ 108,238.07**

CSUMB will be removed from social assistance as the new consolidated housing and homelessness program is introduced in January 1, 2013.

- As part of the first phase of consolidation under the Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy, the Community Start Up and Maintenance Benefit is being removed from social assistance, with a portion of funding to be included in a new consolidated program administered by municipalities to provide housing and homelessness services and supports.
- The DSB has yet to receive any confirmation on the amount of funds that will be added to the Homelessness program.
- CSUMB is a mandatory social assistance benefit that provides funding to eligible recipients to assist with the costs of:
 - establishing a new residence
 - preventing eviction or discontinuation of heating or utilities
 - maintaining an existing residence
 - All Ontario Works and ODSP clients may be eligible to access CSUMB which provides up to a maximum of \$799 for an eligible single recipient and \$1500 for an eligible family on social assistance over a 24-month period.

Ontario Works Home Repairs

Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB 2011 Expenditure's \$6,265.73

The 2012 Budget announced that home repair benefits are being removed from social assistance effective January 1, 2013

Home repairs are provided as a mandatory benefit through ODSP and as a discretionary benefit through Ontario Works. The cost of a necessary home repair may be provided if no other funding is available and:

- The recipient could be forced to vacate the home if these repairs are not done;
- There is a risk to the health or well-being of a member of the benefit unit; and/or
- Extensive damage will result to the home if the repairs are not undertaken immediately.

Ontario Renovates is a new municipal housing program that is available to assist low-income Ontarians, including social assistance recipients with the cost of necessary home repairs.

Persons with disabilities can also seek funding for home modifications from the Home and Vehicle Modification Program, which is funded by MCSS and administered by the Ontario March of Dimes.

The reality is that the DSB was allocated \$1,015,176 under the Investment in Affordable Housing Program and the Board approved [Program Delivery and Fiscal Plan](#) at the November 2011 Board meeting. In the plan the Board allocated \$965,177 to the Ontario Renovates Program over the next 3 years. The waiting list for the Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB - Ontario Renovates Program has 135 households with requests for repairs totaling in excess of \$2 Million dollars.

The DSB does not have sufficient funds to handle the requests we currently have on the waiting list, so the possibility of new applicants being approved is unlikely.

Ontario Works Discretionary Benefits

Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB 2011 Expenditures

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| Health Related Benefits | \$ 86,543 |
| Non- Health Related Benefits | \$ 60,491 |
| Total | \$147,034 |

The existing formula of \$8.75 per case for non-health related discretionary benefits would be replaced with a new formula of \$10 per case on combined health and non-health related discretionary benefits effective July 1, 2012

Health related discretionary benefits include:

- dental care for adults on Ontario Works and adult children of ODSP clients;
- eye-glasses for adults on Ontario Works and adult children of ODSP clients;
- a portion of the costs of prosthetic appliances;
- funerals and burials; and
- any other special service, item, or payment authorized by the Director of Ontario Works (e.g. child care costs in situations where a recipient requires child care to attend a medical appointment).

Non-health related discretionary benefits include:

- vocational training and retraining;
- travel and transportation that is not for health-related purposes;
- moving expenses; and
- any other special service, item or payment authorized by the Director of Ontario Works

Based on our early analysis of these new rules the Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB will have an annual allocation of approximately \$145,000 for health and non-health related discretionary benefits effective July 1, 2012. Since our expenditures for 2011 were \$147,034, we may be able to manage within the new allocation, however once the CSUMB is eliminated in January 2013, this will put a lot of pressure on the discretionary benefits allocation. A majority of the items covered by the CSUMB benefit are also eligible under discretionary benefits so we will need to track and monitor this closely to ensure we do not exceed our allocation.

DSB staff are currently reviewing the Ontario Works Discretionary Benefits policy and will be providing the Board with a revised policy before the July 1, 2012 changes take effect.

Employment Services Integration

The government will be looking at opportunities to integrate Ontario Works and ODSP employment services with the broader Employment Ontario network

According to the Ministry of Community & Social Services no decisions have been made yet about integrating employment services. Ministry staff has indicated they will be working closely with the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities and municipal partners to explore this idea.

Social Housing & Homelessness

There was very little mention of Housing or Homelessness in the 2012 provincial budget.

Children's Services

There is nothing in the provincial budget to indicate cuts or new funding for child care services

Previous commitments to maintain the current Full-Day Kindergarten program and class sizes were reiterated.

Emergency Medical Services

There was no mention of land ambulance services in the 2012 provincial budget. At this point we are unaware of any impacts to the provincial funding provided for EMS.

The province did announce an increased investment in home care and community services by approximately 4% annually over three years (\$526 million per year).

Ontario Child Benefit (OCB)

The province is delaying the planned increase of the OCB to \$1,310 (from the current \$1,110). The province will phase the increase in over two years, to \$1,210 in July 2013 and \$1,310 in July 2014.

Ontario Municipal Partnership Fund

The budget indicates that the Ontario Municipal Partnership Fund (OMPF) will be phased down to \$500 million by 2016. For 2013 and future years, this will represent a cut to the province's main transfer and equalization program for municipalities of approximately \$25 million in each of the next four years. The government has also proposed reviewing the funding program, "within the program's identified envelope."

Social Assistance Upload

The upload of social assistance costs through PMFSDR will continue as originally committed to, ending in 2018.