



Report To: Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB

From: Donna Stewart, Director of Integrated Social Services and
Anne Quenneville, Ontario Works Program Supervisor

Date: May 28, 2020

Re: Social Services Relief Fund (SSRF)

Background:

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic the Province has created a \$200 million SSRF for services across the province to help protect the health and safety of the province's most vulnerable people.

On March 23, 2020, a [joint memo](#) was received from the Ministry of Children, Community, and Social Services (MCCSS) and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) outlining broadly how the SSRF would be allocated. The SSRF includes two components, funding to individuals for current and non-social assistance clients (\$52 million across the province), and funding to Service System Managers to keep frontline critical social services operating (\$148 million across the province). The component targeted to individuals will be allocated through social assistance. The memo included information pertaining to expanding emergency assistance for individuals, expanding discretionary benefits with a maximum benefit of \$100 for single individuals and \$200 for families, and reducing health and safety impacts by changing requirements in Ontario Works for paper-based documentation.

On April 1, 2020, the Board Chair, Les Gamble, received a [letter](#) from the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, allocating \$938,400 to the DSB under SSRF.

SSRF can be used for a broad range of social services to support vulnerable people while promoting social distancing and self-isolation. The DSB has received 50% of its allocation during the week of April 6 with the balance to follow as quarterly payments. Staff are working with community agencies to allocate these funds in a timely fashion for services to those in need which represent a flexible amendment to the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative Agreement.

In the homeless service system, funding provided under the SSRF would follow CHPI guidelines and 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)
- 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.

To date, the DSB has committed to \$531,189 towards:

- \$146,840 in Emergency Shelter Solutions (shelters, motel/hotel stays)
- \$336,349 towards Service and Supports (food securities, cleaning, PPE, transportation)
- \$48,000 in Homelessness Prevention (rent banks, emergency financial assistance, utility banks)

The DSB has organized food supply to be delivered to all of our food banks in the district to ensure adequate food supply as local grocery stores have limited capacity. The food banks are also provided funding for transportation and accommodations should they require help with the homeless population. The DSB has also partnered with Manitoulin Family Resources to secure a place to stay, food and supports for the homeless population on the Manitoulin and LaCloche areas. We are also assisting First Nations individuals who have leased land and cannot return home due to the First Nations Emergency Order restrictions. In addition, we have partnered with various agencies (Noojmowin Teg Health Centre, CMHA to name a few) to help ensure that the First Nations population as well as our tenants are provided adequate food supply. Our two Transitional Community Support Workers are also contacting all tenants throughout the DSB to ensure that if they need any supports, that those supports are available to them.

Conclusion

The DSB staff continues to be in discussion with a range of stakeholders to implement both the known, and the yet-to-be-announced, funding programs. Specifically, the wide range of homelessness resource and support services with which the DSB regularly does business, continues to be engaged as we address complex situations involving the homeless and vulnerable populations/communities.

Staff is working with community agencies throughout the district to identify what services are required and to support them with the Social Service Relief Fund if they fit the criteria. Staff will report back to the Board at a later date on how funding will be used in its' entirety.