



Report To:	Program Planning Committee
From:	Donna Moroso, Director of Integrated Social Services and Rhonda McCauley, Social Program Supervisor
Date:	January 23, 2013
Re:	Healthy Communities Fund - Issue Report

### **Recommendations:**

That the Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB Program Planning Committee recommends approval of the new Healthy Communities Fund (HCF) Policy to the Board.

### **Purpose:**

As a result of the new Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative guidelines, staff have reviewed the current Healthy Communities Fund policy and have made the changes necessary to ensure that the new guidelines are being followed when allocating the funds to low income families.

### **Background:**

The Community Start-Up and Maintenance Benefit has been removed from the Social Assistance system effective January 1, 2013. Fifty percent of the provincial expenditures from CSUMB are being transferred to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing and being consolidated into one funding envelope along with the homelessness funding.

The new envelope is now called the 'Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative' (CHPI) and is a 100% provincially funded investment that amounts to approximately \$246 million for 2013-14. This includes the current level of funding associated with the five existing programs.

## Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative Guidelines

The Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI) aims to prevent, address and reduce homelessness by improving access to adequate, suitable and affordable housing that is linked to flexible support services based on peoples' needs. The CHPI is a result of the consolidation of funding from five provincial homelessness-related programs.

Consistent with Ontario's Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy (LTAHS) and the Ontario Housing Policy Statement, the CHPI has the following objectives:

- To enable DSSAB/CMSM's to better support a full range of services that aim to prevent, reduce and address homelessness at the local level.
- To facilitate the development of seamless support services programming to connect individuals and families to community resources and assist households at risk of or experiencing homelessness to obtain and retain affordable housing that is linked to supports appropriate to their needs.
- To promote a culture of policy, planning and service delivery that is focused on an outcome-based and people-centered approach, while recognizing the complexity of homelessness and issues related to homelessness.
- To create and support opportunities for DSSAB/CMSM's to develop creative and innovative approaches.
- To increase flexibility at the local level to prevent, reduce and address homelessness.

The Province has established two key program outcomes for the CHPI, which will measure performance and ensure accountability:

- a) People experiencing homelessness obtain and retain housing; and,
- b) People at risk of homelessness remain housed.

DSSAB/CMSM's are required to deliver services that will address **both** program outcomes.

DSSAB/CMSM's are also required to develop and submit an Investment Plan (IP) that will outline how their funding allocations will be used each year.

Under the CHPI, DSSAB/CMSM's have the flexibility to use funding for any of the following four service categories:

1. Emergency Shelter Solutions
2. Housing with Related Supports
3. Other Services and Supports
4. Homelessness Prevention

## **Summary of the new Healthy Communities Fund Policy:**

The Healthy Communities Fund (HCF) aims to prevent, address and reduce homelessness by improving access to adequate, suitable and affordable housing that is linked to flexible support services based on peoples' needs. The HCF is a result of the consolidation of funding from five provincial homelessness-related programs.

The Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB's Healthy Communities Fund is comprised of four separate service components:

1. Emergency Shelter Solutions
2. Housing with Related Supports
3. Other Services and Supports
4. Homelessness Prevention

The four service categories capture services and activities designed to meet the needs of households who are:

- Currently homeless; or
- At risk or in imminent risk of homelessness

### **Emergency Shelter Solutions**

Local non-profit community organizations can access the Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB's emergency shelter solutions under the HCF funding to assist individuals with emergency food and shelter costs.

In order for local non-profit community organizations to access the Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB's emergency shelter solutions under the HCF funding they are required to submit a business case indicating how they will assist individuals with emergency food and shelter costs and how much money they are requesting.

Emergency Shelter Solutions could include, but are not limited to:

- A 'safe' bed offered in a variety of settings (e.g., emergency shelters and hotels);
- Necessary basic needs (e.g., food, clothing, blankets, hygiene items and other essentials) and
- Support services (transportation from street to shelter, outreach services, assistance with securing shelter).

## Housing with Related Supports, Other Services and Supports, Homelessness Prevention

Eligibility for these components will be limited to one issuance within a **12 month** period. Under exceptional circumstances clients may be able to exceed the above policy with the approval of the Director of Integrated Social Services.

Eligibility for the housing with related supports, other services and supports and the homelessness prevention will be based on the most recent Low Income Cut-Off (LICO) for the appropriate family size published by the **Statistics Canada**. In order to qualify for these benefits, all individuals applying must demonstrate that they have exhausted all other possible financial resources including disposition of assets where reasonable.

<b>Statistics Canada</b> Before Tax Low-Income Cut-Off (LICO), 2010	
<b>Family Size</b>	<b>Income</b>
1 person	\$ 12,271
2 persons	\$ 14,936
3 persons	\$ 18,598
4 persons	\$ 23,202
5 persons	\$ 26,421
6 persons	\$ 29,301
7+ persons	\$ 32,182

In order to qualify for the Healthy Communities Fund, individuals need to complete the Healthy Communities Fund application as well as the action plan.

### 1. Housing With Related Supports

Housing support services could include, but are not limited to:

- Housing allowance, supplement or Direct Shelter Subsidy Program (see policy # 10.3)
- Assistance with obtaining long-term or transitional housing; and
- Household set-up assistance (e.g., transportation, furniture, moving costs, provision of first/last month rent, utility deposits and hook-up fees, storage costs if other means are unavailable).

### 2. Other Services and Supports

Other services and supports related to community inclusion and increased independence for clients receiving housing supports could include, but are not limited to:

- Employment supports, placement and training;
- Education, learning and leadership opportunities;
- Family re-unification;
- Relocation for victims of family violence;
- Peer support;
- Relocation due to uninhabitable premises; and
- Furniture replacement due to pest infestation, fire, flood or uncontrollable damage.

### **3. Homelessness Prevention**

Homelessness prevention services could include, but are not limited to:

- Financial assistance for emergency needs, rental or utilities arrears (or to prevent arrears on emergency basis);
- Short term payment of rent to prevent eviction if no other assistance is available;
- Assistance to secure and retain housing (e.g. re-housing); and
- Provision of basic necessities like food.

### **Services not Eligible under Healthy Community Fund**

The following services / activities are not eligible to be funded under the HCF:

- Capital expenditures, which include:
  - New construction and/or conversions of buildings;
  - Repairs and renovations;
  - Retrofits;
  - Buying land; and
  - Purchasing buildings.
- The construction, repair, and renovation of new and existing social and affordable housing.
- Services that do not directly support people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

### **Conclusion:**

At the present we are seeking the Program Planning Committee's recommendation to the Board to approve these changes to the Healthy Communities Fund policy which are in accordance with the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative Guidelines.