



Report To:	Manitoulin-Sudbury District Services Board
From:	Connie Morphet, Director of Finance & Administration Patrick Wittmann, Supervisor of Infrastructure & Asset Management
Date:	January 25, 2018
Re:	Innovation, Evidence, and Capacity Building Fund Grant – Issue Report

Purpose

This report is intended to inform the Board about the [Ministry of Housing: Innovation, Evidence, and Capacity Building \(IEC\) Fund](#) and subsequent successful grant application.

Background

The Supervisor of Infrastructure & Asset Management has been engaged with Abhilash Kantamneni, PhD candidate from the University of Guelph since November of 2016. The relationship developed from a mutual concern with rising utility costs, an interest in energy efficiency improvements for social housing providers and the challenges associated with the federal/provincial retrofit programs that have been provided over the course of the past 5 years (REI, SHARP, SHEEP, SHIP, etc.).

Innovation, Evidence, and Capacity Building Fund (IEC)

The IEC Fund was a call for grant applications that would provide up to \$1 million aiming to increase local sector capacity, encourage an evidence-based orientation and support the capacity of the system under the key themes of the Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy Update. The maximum grants were \$100,000 and the eligible organizations included:

- Not-for-profit organizations
- Municipal associations
- Registered Charities
- Municipalities
- DSSABs, and
- Other public bodies (e.g. academic institutions and school boards).

Grant Application Synopsis

The [grant application](#) was submitted in May of 2017, the synopsis is as follows:

Affecting Policy and Program Development through an Investigation into Housing Retrofit Programs and the Sustainable Supply of Housing.

Utility bills represent the largest controllable operational expenses for social housing in Ontario (\$500 million per year)¹. Yet, despite decades of provincial and utility retrofit programs, housing providers continue to face challenges successfully gaining appropriately funded grants as well as planning and implementing energy retrofits. The key to sustainability is reduction of energy use, but accomplishing this in accordance with the Long Term Affordable Housing Strategy (LTAHS) requires a change at the policy and program development stage to ensure inclusivity for Northern Ontario housing providers.

This research project seeks to unlock the massive potential for energy savings in the social housing sector by:

- Building sector-wide capacity for planning and implementing energy upgrades including developing best-practice guidelines for Northern Ontario providers.
- Improving sector-wide readiness when responding to Government Grant programs.
- Informing government policy and program development for future energy retrofit programs so that Northern Ontario housing providers gain eligibility to social housing retrofit programs.

The project is expected to run for one year. The Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB will lead the project and work with Abhilash Kantamneni, PhD candidate, University of Guelph. Mr. Kantamneni has an extensive resume and has successfully lead community engaged energy retrofit programs.

The DSB was notified that the grant application was approved in a [letter](#) dated December 9, 2017. A grant in the amount of \$69,320 was awarded and this was only one of nine grants awarded province-wide.

Recommendations:

DSB staff will provide the Board with an update on the results of the research and policy based impacts resulting from this grant application.

¹ HSC. (2015, Oct 15). [Housing Services Corporation \(HSC\) Submission to EB-2014-0134](#)