



Report To:	Manitoulin-Sudbury District Services Board
From:	Donna Stewart, Director of Integrated Social Services
Date:	September 24, 2020
Re:	Social Services Relief Fund Phase 2 – Issue Report

Purpose

To provide the Board with an update on the Social Services Relief Fund Phase 2 Business Case that was [announced](#) by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) on August 12, 2020.

Background

The housing and homelessness sectors in Ontario have had to alter the ways in which they provide services to vulnerable populations due to the COVID-19 outbreak. The Social Services Relief Fund (SSRF) Phase 2 will provide \$362 million in provincial and federal funding to help a diverse range of vulnerable people, create longer-term housing solutions for people in need, and ensure that the housing and homelessness sector has the tools and support that they need to safely and successfully transition to recovery.

SSRF Phase 2 builds on the province's initial \$200 million investment under the Social Services Relief Fund [announced](#) on March 23, 2020.

Phase 1

The initial SSRF was a shared initiative between the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing and the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS), with funding provided under two streams:

1. \$148 million in block funding provided to Service Managers and Indigenous Program Administrators to support municipalities and organizations that administer social services in their response to the COVID-19 outbreak (administered by MMAH); and
2. \$52 million to individuals in financial crisis with no access to other supports, and those currently on social assistance requiring additional resources (administered by the MCCSS and delivery partners).

On May 28, 2020, the staff [informed](#) the board that the initial SSRF was intended to support a range of vulnerable populations, including people living in community housing, supportive housing, people with low incomes, social assistance recipients, and others who require social services support as well as those experiencing homelessness. Phase 1 funding will be spent by October 31, 2020 in the following manner:

Summary of SSRF Phase 1 Expenditures	
Emergency Shelter Solutions (shelters, motel/hotel stays)	\$95,000
Homelessness Prevention (rent banks, emergency financial assistance, utility banks)	\$125,000
Service and Supports (food securities, cleaning, PPE, transportation)	\$624,560
Administration 10%	\$93,840
Total	\$938,400

SSRF Phase 2

Phase 2 brings the total SSRF investment for Service Managers and Indigenous Program Administrators to \$510 million (i.e. \$148 million in initial SSRF funding announced on March 23, 2020, \$150 million in SSRF funding announced on July 2, 2020, and \$212 million in additional SSRF funding announced on August 12, 2020).

SSRF Phase 2 builds on the support being delivered as part of the COVID-19 Action Plan to Protect Vulnerable Ontarians and will help Ontario safely restart its economy and become more resilient to future waves of COVID-19, which are key priorities of the federal funding under the Safe Restart Agreement.

The objectives for SSRF Phase 2 as are follows:

1. Mitigate ongoing risk for vulnerable people, especially in congregate care settings:
 - Where appropriate, support changes to the physical design of congregate spaces, permit physical distancing and other modifications based on public health guidance; and
 - Provide ongoing services and supports to address immediate pandemic needs of vulnerable people.

2. Encourage longer-term housing-based solutions to homelessness post-COVID-19:
 - Use funding in ways that create longer-term housing solutions, move towards client service models that are innovative, and support client and organizational readiness for potential future outbreaks or emergencies.

3. Enhance rent assistance provided to households in rent arrears due to COVID-19:

- Consider using funding to support renter households who may be in rental arrears and at a high risk of becoming homeless.

MMAH will again be administering this investment to Service Managers through distinct components of the existing Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI) Service Agreement.

For SSRF Round 2, all Service Managers were provided with an initial planning allocation. In the Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB district, the DSB received \$897,838.

Prior to funds being flowed and allocations confirmed, Service Managers are required to submit a business case to demonstrate how their initial planning allocations will be used to meet the objectives of the program. The deadline to submit business cases to MMAH was September 11, 2020. The DSB submitted the [SSRF Phase 2 Business Case](#) by the deadline pending board approval.

Business Case Details

The Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB staff reached out to the Executive Director of the Manitoulin Family Resources (MFR) agency to discuss the SSRF Phase 2 funding and whether or not they would have any need for the funding for potential shelter, food bank and/or thrift store demands.

The Manitoulin Family Resources indicated that capital funding for retrofit of the Violence Against Women (VAW) residential shelter would be required:

- to address required physical distancing, required isolation/quarantine area expansion to allow for new admissions as well as care for ill individuals, ability to cohort clients, acquisition of bedroom and bathroom space;
- to allow for needed client capacity (individuals not sharing rooms if not family) and reducing likelihood of transmission from community-based counsellors, finance department, and administration staff into VAW shelter space through separation of airflow systems, and separation of program staff.

They further indicated that funding would allow them to build an expansion which allows for community-based counsellors to provide safe service to both VAW shelter residents and those still in community who may need to be linked to VAW shelter service. It would further provide for continuity of agency business in the event of a shelter outbreak when all non-shelter staff would be prevented from entering the building, as well as an access point for VAW clients to meet with Victim Witness Assistance Program staff, Victim Services staff, and other relevant community service providers to meet with clients.

Lastly, funding for a new food bank/thrift store would allow resumption of needed services of making inexpensive household goods and clothing available to the public, as well as meeting the much-expanded needs of the food bank and its larger client base. The larger building meets the physical distancing, air flow, capacity, and disinfection/health and safety needs of the building's attendees, as well as capacity of the ever-growing client numbers. Incorporating the purchase of a cargo van would allow for the expanded delivery of needed household goods, clothing, and food into the communities throughout their service region, to access points such as already existing Food Banks in Espanola, Massey, Markstay, Killarney and Chapleau.

Summary of SSRF Phase 2 Proposal	
Expand capacity within existing VAW building	\$51,414
Cargo Van for Transportation for Food & Thrift Store items	\$40,000
Capital: New Food Bank and Thrift Store	\$796,947
Capital: Conversion of current Food Bank Building	\$300,127
Total Proposal	\$1,188,488
SSRF Available	\$897,838
Shortfall	(\$290,650)

The province has held back 30% of the available 212M in SSRF Phase 2 funding which amounts to an additional 62M dollars. Manitoulin Family Resources will be responsible to cover any shortfall and/or reduce the scope of work should the province not approve the full amount.

Conclusion

Staff are recommending the Board approve the SSRF Phase 2 Business Case as submitted to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing on Sept 11, 2020.

DSB staff will continue to work closely with Manitoulin Family Resources to ensure that business case if approved will be implemented accordingly.