

Press Release - Manitoulin Local Social Services Relief Fund

The Ontario government is providing funding that will be a significant investment into the wellbeing of the vulnerable populations in the Manitoulin-LaCloche Region. With support from the Manitoulin-Sudbury District Services Board, Manitoulin Family Resources will be receiving just over \$1 million to allow for significant improvements to operations in both their Violence Against Women Prevention and Food Security Programs. Funding is provided by the provincial government through the Social Services Relief Fund (SSRF), which is intended to support a range of vulnerable populations, including those with low incomes, those needing social services support, and those needing access to shelter.

“Throughout the pandemic, our local partners have consistently stepped up to protect public health and safety, while continuing to deliver local services that some of our most vulnerable Ontarians rely on every day,” said the Hon. Steve Clark, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. “Through the Social Services Relief Fund, our government continues to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with our local partners to ensure they have the flexible supports they need to keep every member of our communities safe, housed, and healthy.”

Funding approved for Manitoulin Family Resources through the SSRF includes:

- Capital dollars to support the retrofit of the Violence Against Women residential shelter to address required physical distancing, required isolation and quarantine area expansion, and the conversion of office spaces to bedrooms and bathrooms. Such changes will allow each woman or family staying in the shelter to have their own room and private washroom, following a best practice recommendation from public health, while returning the shelter to pre-pandemic capacity.
- Capital dollars to establish a new food bank and thrift store, twice the size of the agency’s previous building, to meet the community needs of providing this service in a COVID-safe environment. The agency had to close the community thrift store at the start of the pandemic and due to lack of space for physical distancing, as well as significant food bank usage increase, has had to keep the store closed throughout the pandemic. The joint food bank and thrift store operation is a long-standing source of inexpensive household goods and clothing for much of the local community, including those using the food bank or women’s shelter. The larger building will meet the physical distancing, air flow, and disinfection/health and safety needs of the building’s attendees while also supporting the greater physical space needs of a growing food bank.
- The purchase of a cargo van to assist the food bank and thrift store while also allowing for delivery of needed household goods, clothing and food into communities served by agency operations, or coordinating with other centres in the district.
- And capital dollars to assist with the expansion and conversion of the agency’s current food bank building into a “Hub” for community-based services. This space will allow for clients to take part in agency programs and workshops, meet safely with a variety of workers in a COVID-safe way, and return to in-person services that were significantly impacted by COVID-19 requirements and the retrofit of the shelter.

All work is expected to be completed by the end of 2021.