



August 21, 2012

The Honourable John Milloy  
Minister of Community and Social Services  
80 Grosvenor Street  
Hepburn Block  
6th Floor  
Toronto, Ontario M7A 1E9

Dear Minister Milloy,

On behalf of the District of Nipissing Social Services Administration Board, we appreciate the opportunity to discuss our concerns on the impact of the funding cuts in the Community Start Up and Maintenance (CSUM) benefit within the Nipissing District.

### **Background**

In 2011, the District of Nipissing spent \$862,426 on CSUM benefits for OW clients and \$500,000 for ODSP clients. This mandatory benefit assisted recipients with the cost of establishing a new residence, prevented eviction or discontinuation of heating and/or utilities, and/or assisted in maintaining an existing residence. OW and ODSP clients were eligible to receive \$799 for a single recipient and \$1,500 for a family on social assistance within a 24-month period. This benefit cost was shared 82.8% / 17.2% between the province and municipalities for OW and 100% by the province for ODSP.

Currently, as part of the Long Term Affordable Housing Strategy (LTAHS), five housing and homelessness programs are now consolidated into a new program to be administered by municipalities. The five funds being consolidated are:

1. Emergency Energy Fund
2. Consolidated Homelessness Prevention Program
3. Provincial Rent Bank
4. Emergency Hostel Services
5. Domiciliary Hostel Program (None in Nipissing)

### **Funding Impacts in Nipissing**

The total amount of the new needs-based funding has been set at \$614,124. Add to this the base funding of \$135,454 from the above programs, and the total envelope provided

to Nipissing is \$749,578. The potential impact of this reduction in funding is very significant given that Nipissing citizens required the full base funding from the above programs in addition to the total CSUM of \$1,362,426 (ODSP + OW) since 2011.

### **Client Impacts**

This funding shortfall will have a detrimental impact on Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support clients. ***The envelope of funds that has been allocated to the Nipissing Housing Program is approximately half of what was previously available for distribution to recipients of OW and ODSP.*** Not only has the amount been reduced to less than 50%, the scope of the program has increased to include all of the eligible population, be they clients or qualifying working poor. The outcome is a much smaller pot of funds to be distributed to a potentially much larger group.

### **Social Safety Net Implications**

It is imperative that clients have access to this funding on an emergency basis as in the existing process. The purpose of CSUM is broader than it may appear as the directive allows for the issuance of funds where there is a threat to the health or welfare of a recipient or a member of the benefit unit in a non-start up situation. There is no other benefit available to address client needs in such situations. The effective 50% reduction of this benefit will lead to a higher incidence of homelessness and pressures on local social service organizations and NGOs that do not have sustainable funding capacity to provide increased levels of support. We foresee the result of this potential crisis situation will be an increase in the applications for Discretionary Benefits, which have now been capped even in health related situations, placing the burden of cost back on the municipalities.

### **Nipissing DSSAB's Request**

We respectfully request that the Ministry consider these implications and provide sufficient funding to meet the emergency needs of the citizens we serve in 2013. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



George Maroosis, Chair  
Chair, DNSSAB Board



Mayor Al McDonald  
Member, DNSSAB Board