



Memo

To: Community Leaders in the City of Greater Sudbury

From: Social Planning Council of Sudbury

The Impact of the Impending Cuts to Community Start Up and Maintenance Benefit (CSUMB) Funding

I write to you today to draw your attention to the impending crisis that we will experience in our community as a result of the loss of CSUMB benefits to the most vulnerable people in our community in January 2013.

CSUMB funding is money available to individuals who receive Ontario Works (welfare) or ODSP (Disability Support Payments) in our community. It is well established that an individual living on social assistance once they have paid the rent cannot buy healthy food and they certainly can't manage financial emergencies. CSUMB is a benefit that is available once every 2 years to an individual or family and is often the difference between becoming/staying housed or becoming homeless. It is used for things like first and last month's rent for people who are coming out of an institution (hospital, shelter, prison) or having to leave inadequate housing for health reasons, people (mostly women and children) leaving an abusive situation, someone about to be evicted, or it could be used to keep the heat, hydro, or water on in a home. Sometimes it bought beds for children and adults who have been sleeping on the floor.

Changes to the ways funds are being provided to communities for housing and homelessness programs have resulted in both an amalgamation of a variety of funds to give communities more flexibility in how they respond to the challenges of homelessness (potentially a good thing) and an overall loss in the amount of money a community has to deal with such things. In a report to Council in September of 2012 staff informed Council that the overall loss to our community is **\$1.6 million**. The magnitude of this loss is almost incomprehensible. I cannot imagine how we are going to manage keeping people housed, keeping the heat and hydro on – providing for basic human needs in our community.

People already living in poverty will suffer the greatest impact of these cuts. Things will get even more difficult. These cuts will however create serious problems right across the community. This is not a "Social Services" crisis and it is not a crisis that the Charitable Sector can be expected to manage. This crisis will have far reaching effects in Health Care, Emergency Services, Police, Education, Children's Aid, Business – all of our outcomes are interconnected and all of us will be affected. And the cost to all of this will certainly be more than the 1.6 million dollars that the government is "saving" by cutting these funds.

It is imperative that all voices across our community (and communities across Ontario) be raised in objection to these cuts. Chiefs of Police, Hospital CEO's, Industry leaders, Education leaders, - anyone who cares about the wellbeing of our community needs to understand the impact of leaving people in deep poverty. There is plenty of data that shows the outcomes in terms of health, education, crime, employment, wellbeing – all are impacted by poverty – and all of them cost way more to fix than to avoid. **Please contact your associates/associations across the province and insist that these cuts be rescinded by the Provincial Government of Ontario.**

Janet Gasparini, Executive Director