



Michael Mantha MPP/député
Algoma–Manitoulin

December 11th, 2019

Hon. Jill Dunlop
Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services
5th Floor
438 University Ave.
Toronto, ON M5G 2K8

RE: MANITOULIN-SUDBURY DISTRICT SERVICES BOARD RESOLUTION 19-86, DIRECT SHELTER
SUBSIDY (DSS) PROGRAM

Dear Minister Dunlop,

I am please to submit this letter of support in regards to the Manitoulin-Sudbury District Services Board's resolution 19-86, Direct Shelter Subsidy (DSS) program.

It is clear that there is great need for Direct Shelter Subsidy investment in Northern communities is needed. As MPP for Algoma-Manitoulin I hear from constituents across the riding that they are in desperate need of such programs. Manitoulin-Sudbury District Services Board works tirelessly to improve the quality of life for individuals, families and the entire community, and for that reason they understand the importance of such programs from their first hand experience on the front lines.

"The DSS program is designed to help low-income families and clients on social assistance who are on the Manitoulin-Sudbury District Services Board Housing waitlist, access a variety of housing options. This program gives priority to applicants living in areas of our DSB where no publicly funded housing is available. The program is also available to seniors age 65 and over, who own their own homes and who meet the eligibility guidelines for Social Housing. The DSS program considers all aspects of shelter costs, including utilities, in determining the benefits payable to eligible clients." This resolution will ensure that they can continue to make a true difference in peoples lives and is sure to enhance quality of life.

I have enclosed for your review, the background information and statistics provided by the Manitoulin-Sudbury District Services Board. However, should you have more questions I would be happy to meet with you to further discuss the benefits of continuing this program.

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Michael Mantha MPP/député
Algoma-Manitoulin

Minister Dunlop, I believe that this program is a necessity and is aligned with the consistent growing needs of Northern communities. I am pleased to offer my support of this resolution and hope that you will carefully review and consider the enclosed information before making any decisions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a long horizontal stroke.

Michael Mantha
MPP Algoma-Manitoulin

Cc: Manitoulin-Sudbury District Services Board



Conseil des Services du District de
Manitoulin-Sudbury
District Services Board

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<http://www.msdsb.net>

December 2, 2019

Carol Hughes, MP Algoma/Manitoulin/Kapusksing
289-A Hillside Drive S.
Elliot Lake, ON
P5A 1N7

AND

Michael Mantha, MPP Algoma-Manitoulin at Province of Ontario
18 Mary Walk
Elliot Lake, ON
P5A 2A1

Dear Mr. Mantha and Ms. Hughes,

Further to our meeting with Carol Hughes on Nov 28, we are requesting your assistance in assuring that the Minister is briefed on our concerns. As you are aware, the Manitoulin-Sudbury District Services Board passed a resolution on November 28, 2019 to discuss with you the Direct Shelter Subsidy (DSS) program and its advantages as opposed to accepting the Canada-Ontario Portable Housing Benefit (PHB) program.

The Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB has been administering the DSS program for over 10 years. The attached report shows the benefits of our program and further indicates that the needs in our community are being met in achieving affordable housing for our clients in the district.

The government's vision of a Canada-Ontario Portable Housing Benefit is associated with two overarching outcomes: decreasing the number of people who are homeless; and increasing the number of families and individuals achieving housing stability. The DSS program has proven to be very successful in ensuring clients have the ability to pay all of their shelter expenses and ensure all of their basic needs are covered. Once their basic needs are taken care of, they can focus other priorities such family, education, skills training and employment in order to become financially independent.

The province's Portable Housing Benefit is a cookie cutter approach and would not work in our district. If we apply the current Portable Housing Benefit calculation, as designed in Ontario, **196 or 70% of our singles and families receiving Direct Shelter Subsidy would not qualify.**

Based on the statistics in the attached report, the Direct Shelter Subsidy program is providing more benefits to our singles and families as it shows that:

- our Direct Shelter Subsidy includes all shelter expenses (rent, heat, hydro etc...) therefore all expenses are considered when determining eligibility;
- the savings to the province based on 120 clients exiting social assistance is in excess of 1 Million dollars a year;
- more people will have more access to housing;
- reduces the overall cost factor by eliminating the need for ongoing operating dollars that are a requirement of having bricks and mortar.

Ms. Hughes, we thank you for meeting with us and we look forward to working with you and Michael Mantha as you raise our concerns to the of Federal and Provincial parliament.

Thank you for your commitment, and we look forward to receiving a response from you.

Sincerely,



Les Gamble
Board Chair

Encl. Board Resolution
Issue Report



Report To:	Property Committee
From:	Donna Stewart, Director of Integrated Social Services and Rhonda McCauley, Social Housing Program Supervisor
Date:	November 27, 2019
Re:	Direct Shelter Subsidy - Issue Report

Purpose

To provide the Board of an analysis of the Direct Shelter Subsidy (DSS) that the Manitoulin-Sudbury District Services Board (DSB) offers to low income families and the positive impact that this program has on those families.

Background

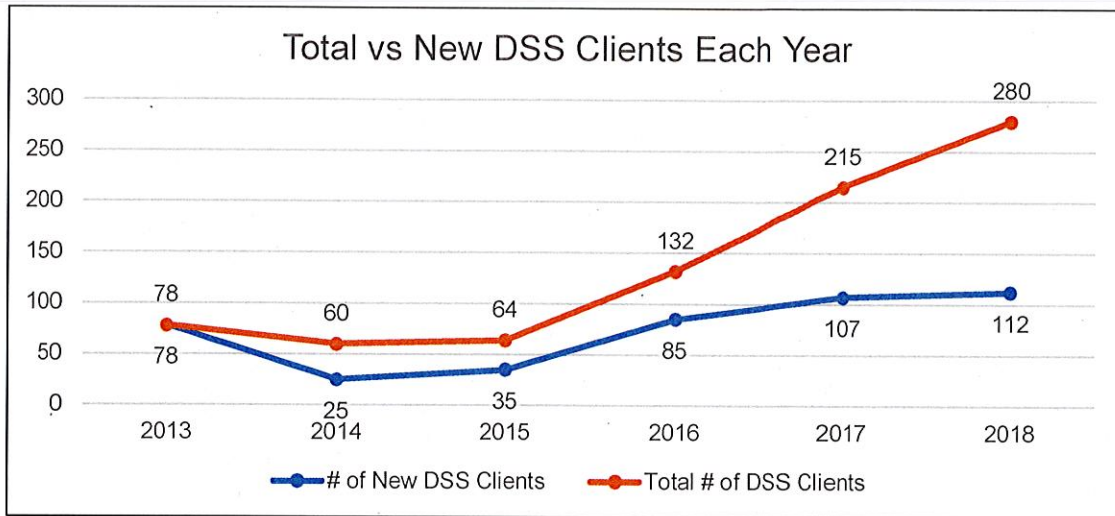
The Direct Shelter Subsidy is designed to help low-income families and clients on social assistance who are on the Manitoulin-Sudbury District Services Board Housing waitlist, access a variety of housing options. This program gives priority to applicants living in areas of our DSB where no publicly funded housing is available. The program is also available to seniors age 65 and over, who own their own homes and who meet the eligibility guidelines for Social Housing. The DSS program considers all aspects of shelter costs, including utilities, in determining the benefits payable to eligible clients.

For low income families, the Direct Shelter Subsidy provided is calculated by determining the difference between the rent geared to income calculation (using 30% of the client's total net income) or affordable housing calculation and the actual rent of the unit they are residing in or a unit that they may be moving to. For Non-Social Assistance recipients, the 30% Rent Geared-To-Income (RGI) calculation factor is used to determine the affordability for the household. For purposes of calculating income, all net income is considered; including but not limited to child/spousal support and Canada Child Tax Benefit. This ensures that the family's net income is taken into consideration when reviewing all accommodation expenses.

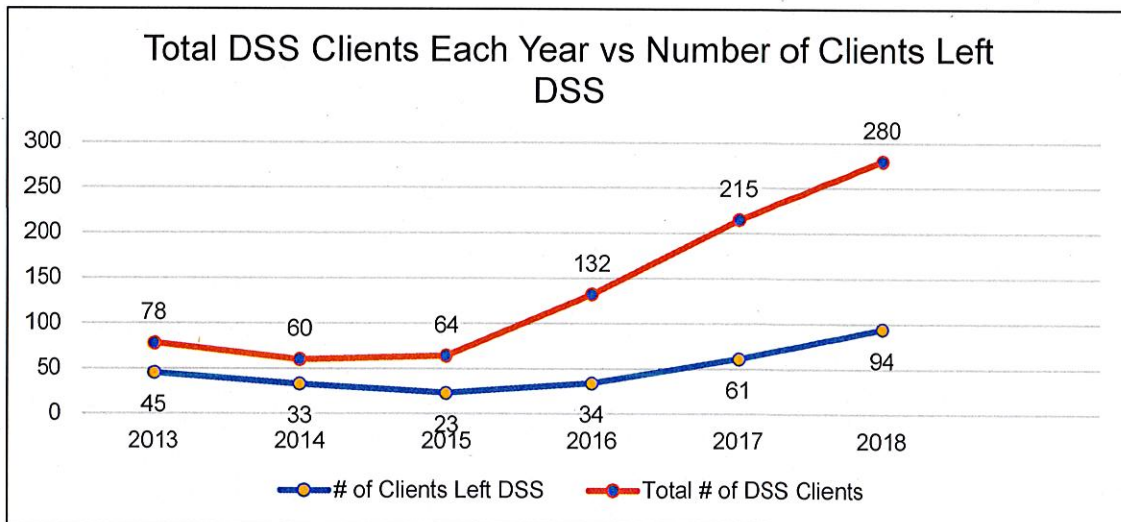
The benefit is also portable to allow greater flexibility and responsiveness to their changing needs and the choice of location, school districts and employment opportunities, without being tied to a specific unit within the DSB catchment area.

Analysis

A review of the DSS program in the Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB was conducted with data collected between 2013 and 2018. A review of this data in chart below shows there has been an increase in the total number of DSS clients from 78 (2013) to 280 (2018); this increase can be attributed to an increase in DSS program funding. Further, the number of new clients has increased within the same time period, from 78 in 2013 to 112 in 2018. This means that in 2018, **40%** of DSS clients were new to the program while the remaining 60% had previously accessed the program.



While the number of clients on DSS has increased, the number of clients that have left the program has fluctuated (see below). In 2013, of the 78 clients accessing DSS, approximately 58% left the program. In 2016, where there were 132 clients accessing DSS, the number of clients that left the program dropped to almost 26%. As of 2018, the number of clients that left the DSS program had started to increase, where almost 34% of DSS clients left the program by the end of the year.



The majority of clients accessing DSS stay on DSS for 1 to 6 months (**39.6%**), with only **6.4%** of clients on DSS for 31 months or longer. Only **3%** of clients were on DSS for longer than 49 months (considering data only between 2013 and 2018). See chart below.

Number of Months on DSS	# of Clients	% of Clients
1 to 6 months	175	39.6%
7 to 12 months	85	19.2%
13 to 18 months	64	14.5%
19 to 24 months	51	11.5%
25 to 30 months	39	8.8%
31 to 36 months	6	1.4%
37 to 42 months	6	1.4%
43 to 48 months	3	0.7%
49 months and higher	13	2.9%
Total	442	-

The chart below shows the number and percent of clients in Social Housing by the number of months they have been living in Social Housing. The data covers leases that start as early as 1989 and run until December 31, 2018. 13 clients were not included as their lease dates started in 2019.

Number of Months in Social Housing	# of Clients	% of Clients
Less than 1 month	5	2.0%
1 to 6 months	24	9.5%
7 to 12 months	11	4.3%
13 to 18 months	10	4.0%
19 to 24 months	11	4.3%
25 to 30 months	20	7.9%
31 to 36 months	12	4.7%
37 to 42 months	14	5.5%
43 to 48 months	11	4.3%
49 months and higher	135	53.4%
Total	253	-

On average, clients are on DSS for at least **13.5 months**. The analysis on tenants in Social Housing revealed, on average, tenants lived in social housing buildings for almost **75 months, or over 6 years**. This reveals that tenants stay in Social Housing almost 6 times longer than recipients on Direct Shelter Subsidy.

Considering the DSS program within the time period of 2013 to 2018, **58.4%** of DSS clients had left the program by the end of 2018. Of these clients, **13.3%** did not access social assistance after leaving DSS. Of the clients that did access social assistance after leaving DSS, **38.7%** were no longer accessing social assistance by the end of 2018. In total, 120 clients (or **46.9%**) that left the DSS program were not accessing social assistance by the end of 2018.

A single person on Ontario Works receives \$ 733/month, \$8,796 annualized. If you multiply that amount by the 120 people who left the DSS program and no longer accessing social assistance, this **saves the province \$ 1,055,520 annually**. With this analysis, one can see that the DSS program has significant long-term savings.

The DSS program has proven to be very successful in ensuring people are housed while they tend to other challenges that they may be having. The data demonstrates that **46.9%** of former DSS recipients are no longer on social assistance.

Difference between DSS and Portable Housing Benefit (PHB)

Currently in our Social Housing units, the rent includes heat and utilities. In circumstances that the heat and utilities are not included as part of their payment, there is a risk of tenants getting their hydro cut off for non-payment or that the units have damages to them.

The Portable Housing Benefit provides a monthly subsidy to low-to-moderate income households to assist with housing costs. The PHB is tied to the household itself and not a physical housing unit. Similar to the DSS program, recipients have flexibility to choose where they live to be closer to family, social support networks, schools and employment opportunities.

Monthly payments to participants are calculated based on household income, as reported on households' latest Canada Revenue Agency notice(s) of assessment, or as verified by Service System Managers in certain circumstances. The Ministry of Finance pays the benefit to participants each month, recalculate the benefit as required, and verify continued eligibility annually.

The formula for this benefit would be the difference between a minimum of 80% of the average market rent (AMR) for the Service Manager area based on Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) rent data for an appropriately sized unit based on household composition and 30% of the household's monthly Adjusted Family Net Income (AFNI). According to CMHC rent data for the Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB, the AMR would be \$646 which would mean that the benefit would be calculated based on 80% of that figure, \$517. This is not a true reflection of the current reality for AMR in the Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB.

Conclusion

The Portable Housing Benefit does not include all shelter expenses and it is essentially a provincial cookie cutter approach with no room for any local flexibility. If the province informed the Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB to calculate the Direct Shelter Subsidy in the same fashion as the Portable Housing Benefit, **70% of our current recipients would not qualify for a portable housing benefit.** A one size fits all solution does not work in Northern, Remote and/or Rural Ontario.

The vision of a rent supplement is associated with two overarching outcomes: decreasing the number of people who are homeless; and increasing the number of families and individuals achieving housing stability. Based on the difference between the Direct Shelter Subsidy and the Portable Housing Benefit, the DSS program pays for the full shelter expenses, ensures that families have stable housing and are able to focus on other challenges that they may be facing.

The Direct Shelter Subsidy reduces the overall cost factor by eliminating the need for ongoing operating dollars that are a requirement of having bricks and mortar. Although the Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB recognizes that when finances allow, the addition of housing units in the portfolio is essential to ensuring that our residents have access to affordable housing, having the ability to administer the DSS Program is essential in our role in reducing homelessness.

Recommendation

The Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB staff are recommending that the province allow local flexibility as they negotiate the creation of a Canada-Ontario Portable Housing Benefit as one size doesn't fit all in Northern, Remote and/or Rural Ontario. The Direct Shelter Subsidy program has proven itself in helping clients become self-sufficient, resulting in significant annual social assistance savings the Province.

Appendix A

The 2020 Direct Shelter Subsidy (DSS) program is funded through a mix of municipal dollars as well as provincial dollars. The breakdown is as follows:

Program	Amount
Municipal	\$ 418, 395
Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative	\$ 295, 268
Investment in Affordable Housing Fund	\$ 128, 396
TOTAL	\$ 842, 059



RESOLUTION 19-86

DATE: November 28, 2019

MOVED BY: Bruce Killah

SECONDED BY: Dave Ham

WHEREAS the Property Committee has reviewed the Direct Shelter Subsidy – Issue Report and is recommending approval to the Board;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Board accept the Property Committees recommendation and approve the Direct Shelter Subsidy – Issue Report and direct staff to action the recommendations in the report.

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Board Chair and the CAO meet with all three Federal Members of Parliament Marc Serré – Nickel Belt, Carol Hughes Algoma-Manitoulin-Kapuskasing and Paul Lefebvre – Sudbury to discuss this issue; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Board Chair and CAO meet with Steve Clark, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing to discuss this issue.

Carried



 CHAIR

MEMBER	YEAS	NAYS	MEMBER	YEAS	NAYS
BEER, JILL			LEVESQUE, MICHAEL		
GAMBLE, LESLIE			MALETTE, RICHARD		
GORHAM, VERN			ROOK, JIM		
HAM, DAVID			SANTI, DAVID		
HAYDEN, ARTHUR			STEPHENS, RICHARD		
KILLAH, BRUCE			VAN ALSTINE, MAUREEN		
LEONARD, DAVID			WHYNOTT, NED		