

**Ministry of  
Municipal Affairs  
and Housing**

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December 20, 2019

Mr. Les Gamble  
Board Chair  
Manitoulin-Sudbury District Services Board  
210 Mead Boulevard  
Espanola ON P5E 1R9

Dear Board Chair Gamble:

Yesterday, Minister Hussen and I announced details about the exciting work our governments have been doing to launch the upcoming **Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit** program under the National Housing Strategy.

This highly anticipated program will provide a portable housing benefit directly to thousands of Ontario households. We expect over 5000 households will receive critical housing assistance in the first year of the program, which includes about 1500 households transitioning from Ontario's Portable Housing Benefit – Special Priority Policy program for survivors of domestic violence and human trafficking.

By 2027-28, we expect over 40,000 households will be assisted, with a total program spend of up to \$1.46 billion split evenly between the provincial and federal governments.

Our government for the people understands the importance of housing that is affordable, adequate and accessible, and that meets the needs of Ontario's diverse communities and populations. Despite the significant fiscal challenges that our government continues to face, we have committed to supporting critical housing investments and to leveraging federal funding through new provincial investments.

### **The Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit**

I am now pleased to provide more information on the Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit, which will begin in April 2020.

As you may know, our government committed to co-design, cost-match and deliver this program. The Province has since finalized negotiations with the federal government and has received the necessary funding and program design approvals to proceed with implementation. My Ministry is now working hard to ensure the program will launch in April 2020, with payments to households beginning as early as that month.

As communicated last April, all households in the province's Portable Housing Benefit – Special Priority Policy program will be supported through the larger Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit. Our Ministry will provide these households with a seamless transition through the annual renewal process.

To maximize our existing investments and processes set up for similar programs and to ensure portability across the province, the Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit will be provincially-delivered. The Ministry of Finance will determine eligibility, calculate the benefit, provide payments directly to households and manage the annual renewal process. Portability provides recipients the freedom to choose where to live and make the housing choices that are best for them, whether in the private market or in community housing.

Other key program design details include:

- Assistance will be provided to households that are on, or eligible to be on, a social housing waiting list.
- Assistance will be prioritized to the following vulnerable household types: survivors of domestic violence and human trafficking, persons experiencing or at-risk of homelessness, Indigenous persons, seniors and people with disabilities.
- Priority will also be given to households that will no longer receive assistance as a result of expiring social housing operating agreements/mortgages and/or federal-provincial housing programs.
- Benefit calculation will be based on the difference between 80 per cent of average market rent and 30 per cent of monthly income (consistent with the benefit calculation for Ontario's Portable Housing Benefit Framework and the Portable Housing Benefit – Special Priority Policy program).
- Social assistance recipients will have a separate maximum benefit calculation to avoid a reduction in social assistance entitlements.
- Households may receive first and last month's rent assistance, if needed.
- Monthly benefit amounts may be adjusted in-year under select circumstances (e.g., change in household composition, decrease of 20 per cent or more in household income).

As the organizations that deliver most housing and homelessness prevention programs, Service Managers will have a vital role to play at the local level. This includes identifying and selecting households to apply for the program and assisting households with the application process.

The program will provide up to the following amounts to assist households approved in the Manitoulin-Sudbury District Services Board's service area for the first two fiscal years:

- 2020-21: **\$70,534**
- 2021-22: **\$92,420**

Please note that your annual planning allocation will be the incremental funding available for new households approved in your service area each fiscal year (i.e., \$70,534 in 2020-21, \$21,886 in 2021-22). Funding for existing households who were

approved from your service area in previous fiscal years and who remain eligible for payments will be administered by the province (i.e., \$70,534 in 2021-22).

These planning allocations were determined using the same funding methodology used in the recently launched Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative, which ensures appropriate geographic distribution of funding.

To help offset administration costs, you may claim administration cost reimbursement at the rate of \$250 per approved household, up to 5 per cent of your annual planning allocation.

My Ministry will provide program dollars to the Ministry of Finance for payments to households. Service Managers may claim administration costs and amounts paid for first and last month's rent assistance on a quarterly basis.

### **Next Steps**

Additional details on the Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit, including program guidelines and application forms, will be shared with your staff in the new year. Should you have any immediate questions, please contact Ravi Bhusia, Manager, Program Development & Analysis Unit at 416-585-6526 or [Ravi.Bhusia@ontario.ca](mailto:Ravi.Bhusia@ontario.ca).

I am pleased that our government is able to continue to support the important work that you do to improve housing outcomes in your community. I look forward to continuing our exciting work together as we launch the final shared investment under the National Housing Strategy – the Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit.

Yours truly,



The Honourable Steve Clark  
Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing

- c. Mr. Fern Dominelli, Chief Administrative Officer, Manitoulin-Sudbury District Services Board