

**Manitoulin-Sudbury District Services Board
POLICY & PROCEDURES MANUAL**

Section: H. Ontario Works	Effective Date: August 1, 2018
Topic: 10. Local Programs	Replaces:
Subject: 10.1 Healthy Communities Fund	September 1, 2016
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POLICY

The Healthy Communities Fund (HCF) aims to prevent, address and reduce homelessness by improving access to adequate, suitable and affordable housing that is linked to flexible support services based on peoples' needs. The HCF is a result of the consolidation of funding from five provincial homelessness-related programs.

The Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB's Healthy Communities Fund is comprised of four separate service components:

1. Emergency Shelter Solutions
2. Housing With Related Supports
3. Other Services and Supports
4. Homelessness Prevention

The four service categories capture services and activities designed to meet the needs of households who are:

- Currently homeless; or
- At risk or in imminent risk of homelessness.

Emergency Shelter Solutions

Local non-profit community organizations can access the Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB's emergency shelter solutions under the HCF funding to assist individuals with emergency food and shelter costs.

Housing With Related Supports, Other Services and Supports, Homelessness Prevention

Eligibility for these components will be limited to one issuance within a 12 month period.

Eligibility for the housing with related supports, other services and supports and the homelessness prevention will be based on the most recent Low Income Cut-Off (LICO) for the appropriate family size published by Statistics Canada. In order to qualify for these benefits, all individuals applying must demonstrate that they have exhausted all other possible financial resources including disposition of assets where reasonable.

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Under exceptional circumstances, clients may be able to exceed the above policy with the approval of the Director of Integrated Social Services.

PROCEDURE

Emergency Shelter Solutions

In order for local non-profit community organizations to access the Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB's emergency shelter solutions under the HCF funding they are required to submit a business case indicating how they will assist individuals with emergency food and shelter costs and how much money they are requesting.

Emergency Shelter Solutions could include, but are not limited to:

- A 'safe' bed offered in a variety of settings (e.g., emergency shelters and hotels);
- Necessary basic needs (e.g., food, clothing, blankets, hygiene items and other essentials) and
- Support services (transportation from street to shelter, outreach services, assistance with securing shelter).

Housing With Related Supports, Other Services and Supports, Homelessness Prevention

In order to qualify for the Healthy Communities Fund, individuals need to complete the Healthy Communities Fund application as well as the action plan.

Applicants must have all utility accounts in their name to receive support for arrears or set up costs. Applicants must not be related (related defined as parent, child, sibling, grandparent, aunt or uncle) to their landlord to be considered. These stipulations are in place for housing related supports, other services and supports or homelessness prevention.

1. Housing With Related Supports

Housing support services could include, but are not limited to:

- Housing allowance, supplement or Direct Shelter Subsidy Program (see policy # 10.3)
- Assistance with obtaining long-term or transitional housing; and Household set-up assistance

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- (e.g., transportation, furniture, moving costs, provision of first/last month rent, utility deposits and hook-up fees, storage costs if other means are unavailable).

2. Other Services and Supports

Other services and supports related to community inclusion and increased independence for clients receiving housing supports could include, but are not limited to:

- Employment supports, placement and training;
- Education, learning and leadership opportunities;
- Family re-unification;
- Relocation for victims of family violence;
- Peer support;
- Relocation due to uninhabitable premises; and
- Furniture replacement due to pest infestation, fire, flood or uncontrollable damage.

3. Homelessness Prevention

Homelessness prevention services could include, but are not limited to:

- Financial assistance for emergency needs, rental or utilities arrears (or to prevent arrears on emergency basis);
- Short term payment of rent to prevent eviction if no other assistance is available;
- Assistance to secure and retain housing (e.g. re-housing); and
- Provision of basic necessities like food.

Emergency Home Repairs

- Home repairs should be minor in nature, necessary to maintain the safety of the home and the health of its residents and be regarded as an emergency.
- Home repairs must be required to prevent a household from becoming homeless, thus responding to the outcome of assisting households at risk of becoming homeless and retain their housing.
- Staff will also explore and exhaust all other funding sources available for home repairs prior to using HCF funding for minor home repairs. Other funding sources may include but are not limited to Ontario Renovates, Home and Vehicle Modification

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Program, the Healthy Homes Tax Credit and Ontario Disaster Relief Assistance Program (ODRAP).

Services NOT Eligible Under HCF

The following services / activities are not eligible to be funded under the HCF:

- Capital expenditures, which include:
 - New construction and/or conversions of buildings;
 - Repairs and renovations (with the exception of emergency repairs listed above);
 - Retrofits;
 - Buying land; and
 - Purchasing buildings.
- The construction, repair, and renovation of new and existing social and affordable housing.
- Services that do not directly support people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

Eligibility Criteria for Housing and Related Supports and Homelessness Prevention:

1. Families and/or individuals who have met with unexpected and/or uncontrollable personal or financial hardship.
2. All individuals applying must demonstrate that they have exhausted all other possible financial resources including disposition of assets where reasonable.
3. Applicants must illustrate that the financial crisis is temporary and can be addressed through this short-term assistance. Applicants must also complete a preventative plan of action.
4. Employable applicants should be able to demonstrate they are actively conducting a job search.
5. Retention of Permanent Accommodations:
 - a) Applicants would be facing eviction or disconnection of services. However, they must not be subject to foreseeable eviction proceedings for reasons *other than* rent arrears.

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- b) Families and/or individuals who are living in unaffordable accommodations **must** complete a realistic plan of action which focuses on reducing their housing expenditure to 30% - 50% of their income.
 - c) Applicants who rent accommodations must also apply for Social Housing.
 - d) Applicants should be able to illustrate that over the course of the arrears they have attempted to make payments.
6. The applicant must be willing to complete an application form which requires the disclosure of their financial situation.
7. Eligibility for the Healthy Communities Fund is limited to once every 12 months. The Director of Integrated Social Services may make an exception in extraordinary circumstances.
8. If the applicant is “**low-income**” please obtain a copy of the client’s most recent net taxable family income. Confirm their net taxable family income as being below the most recent Low Income Cut-Offs (LICO) from Statistics Canada, and that their financial situation has not changed since the assessment. Where the applicant has experienced a significant income change as compared to their most recent net taxable family income, their current income will be taken into account to assess eligibility. For first time applicants where the previous year’s income tax has not been filed, we will use current income to determine eligibility.

Statistics Canada	
After Tax Low-Income Cut-Off (LICO), 2019	
Family Size	Income
1 person	\$16,394
2 persons	\$19,955
3 persons	\$24,846
4 persons	\$30,998
5 persons	\$35,298
6 persons	\$39,147
7+ persons	\$42,995

Reference: <http://www.statcan.gc.ca> – Search for ‘Low income cut-offs’

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Families in receipt of OW and/or ODSP will automatically qualify under the assumption that there is no additional income. Should the Household have additional income, then the LICO chart will be used to determine the net family income.

Application Process:

1. Case Managers (CM) will assess the applicant's need and urgency of assistance by reviewing the eligibility criterion with the applicant.
2. Case Manager will consult with the Healthy Communities Fund Log to determine if the applicant has accessed funds in the past 12 months.
3. If client not eligible, but exceptional circumstances apply, explain circumstances on application, and complete full application and recommend for approval.
4. If the applicant is an Ontario Works or ODSP recipient (SAR- social assistance recipient), they are not required to sign the application. If the applicant is 'low income' (Non-SAR), they are required to sign the application.
5. Case Manager should validate the information received by the applicant where feasible.

The following documentation must be attached:

- proof of arrears (i.e. letter from landlord, utility company, etc)
 - income verification (i.e. copy of recent NOA/CCTB, pay stub, cheque etc.)
 - rent or mortgage receipt
 - verification of identification (photo id required)
 - any other supporting documentation
6. Where the client is applying to retain their permanent accommodations they must :
 - complete the Action Plan and attach it to the application form
 - apply for Social Housing
 7. Case Manager to provide the applicant with a copy of the Action Plan.

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8. Complete the "Request for payment" form. Check the appropriate boxes to access the different fund components breaking down the amount to be paid out where appropriate.
9. **Please scan the request into the electronic filing system in the Non-Shareable Programs Folder (NSP) and follow the [Workflow Job Aide](#).**
10. Once approved the Supervisor will move the approved document into the appropriate 'Approved Benefit' caseload in the electronic filing system. The CM will contact the landlord, utility, etc. and notify them that the arrears will be paid to them **directly** and to discontinue the eviction, disconnection process.
11. If application is **NOT approved**, Supervisor will move the denied request into the appropriate 'For Review' folder in the client's electronic filing system and a note will be input in the social assistance computer system where appropriate.
12. If approved, appropriate IPA/CM will issue payment via the social assistance computer system for OW and ODSP clients. Payment for non OW clients will be issued via a manual cheque by Espanola IPA and coded to the appropriate fund. **In ALL cases where there is an existing file in the Social Assistance Management System all notes and payments will be issued from the database.**
13. Once payment is issued, IPA/CM will move the document to the AA folder in the electronic filing system. The AA will update the Healthy Communities log and file into the HCF folder in the electronic filing system according to year and type of benefit.
14. **If approved, confirmation of the approved amount will be provided to the client and noted.**
15. **If denied, the client will be notified with the reason for the denial, the denial will be noted and the client will be provided with the opportunity to request an Internal Review.**
16. Case Managers should make arrangements for a follow-up call / visit to encourage the applicant to follow their action plan.

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Request for Internal Review

If an applicant or recipient disagrees with a decision, he/she must request an internal review within 30 calendar days from the day the decision is received or deemed to be received. The request must be made in writing.

Written requests for internal reviews may be submitted by letter/note signed by the applicant or recipient.

The letter/note should include:

- a statement indicating that the applicant or recipient wishes to have the decision reviewed;
- the reason he/she disagrees with the decision; and
- the name, case identification and signature of the applicant or recipient requesting the review.

A review will be conducted by a staff other than the original decision maker and an assessment will be undertaken based on our local policy whether or not the applicant or recipient's request is approved or denied.