

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

Section: H. Ontario Works	Effective Date: <b>October 1, 2020</b>
Topic: 10. Local Programs	<a href="#">Replaces: August 1, 2018</a>
Subject: 10.3 Direct Shelter Subsidy	
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**POLICY**

The Direct Shelter Subsidy program is available to households that are Housing Services Act (HSA) eligible, in that the applicants need to meet our financial Household Income Limit criteria. This program is directed to social assistance recipients and low-income families who are on the DSB Housing waiting list.

This program will give priority to applicants living in areas of our DSB where no publicly funded housing is available.

**PROCEDURE**

**The following conditions must be met:**

- The household is on the DSB's community housing waitlist
- Preference will be given to applicants living in areas of our DSB where no publicly funded housing is available.
- Applicant must be living in a self-contained rental unit situation or a municipally licensed/permitted rooming house where the applicant is not related (**related defined as parent, child, sibling, grandparent, aunt or uncle**) to the landlord.
- Applicants in board and lodge situations are not eligible.
- The only rental exception would be for seniors age 65 and over who own their own homes and who's income falls within 2015 High Need Household Income Limits as listed in the DSB Community housing [Centralized Waiting List and Tenant Selection Policy](#). In addition, seniors considered for DSS must meet the asset eligibility guidelines for Community housing.
- Applicants cannot owe rental arrears money to this DSB
- Ideally, the applicant would be on equal billing for all utility costs.
- For social assistance recipients, the Direct Shelter Subsidy provided will be calculated by determining the difference between the Ontario Works or ODSP shelter maximum and the total actual shelter costs paid by the applicant on a monthly basis averaged over a 12-month period.

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- For low income families, the Direct Shelter Subsidy provided will be 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 may be moving to. The benefit will be 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.
- The Direct Shelter Subsidy provided together with the tenant's share of shelter costs cannot exceed the DSB's established Market Rent for the unit size.
- To establish affordability parameters, all aspects of the shelter cost should be considered including utilities. A Social Assistance applicant (OW or ODSP) should not exceed an amount equal to or less than 25% of their Basic Needs amount for the benefit unit size up to the maximum market rent value for said unit size.
- For Non-SAR recipients, the 30% Rent Geared-To-Income (RGI) calculation factor will be used to determine the affordability for the household. Non-SAR recipients will qualify for DSS if the difference in income and affordability is a rate of 25% or less to a maximum amount of \$250/month.
- Any exceptions will be presented to the Director of Integrated Social Services for consideration.
- Where the difference between RGI calculation and the actual market rent or the affordable rent is greater than \$300, these applicants will not be considered for a Direct Shelter Subsidy but will remain on the centralized waiting list for an RGI unit.
- **Effective October 1, 2020 single OW recipients who are offered affordable community housing with the Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB; the maximum benefit payable is \$362.00 per month.**
- For purposes of calculating income, all net income will be considered; including but not limited to child/spousal support and Canada Child Tax Benefit. This will ensure that the family's net income is taken into consideration when reviewing all accommodation expenses.
- Seniors will only be funded through 100% municipal DSS housing dollars. The maximum benefit payable is \$300 per month per eligible household.

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Decisions related to eligibility for the program are not subject to an appeal process, but any applicant deemed ineligible will remain on the waiting list for a suitable unit.

The Direct Shelter Subsidy will provide greater access to a variety of housing options and ultimately assist more people and house people faster, potentially reducing the DSB's waitlist.

Approved DSS recipients will not qualify for the Healthy Communities Fund (HCF) or discretionary benefits for rental or utility arrears.

Exceptions may be considered by the Director of Integrated Social Services however if an exception is approved, the client may no longer qualify for Direct Shelter Subsidy. In situations where an individual is not at maximum DSS, eligibility could be retroactively reviewed up to the maximum monthly amount providing there are funds available and that they are still eligible for DSS.

Direct Shelter Subsidy will be provided on a monthly basis once approved provided that the applicant:

- Pays their rent and provides DSB proof of same by providing a copy of their rent receipt to the DSB every 6 months or as requested by the DSB.
- Social assistance clients on OW Pay Direct to landlord are not required to submit rent receipts.
- Social assistance clients participating in the Exceptions Based Income (EBI) reporting will be required to provide proof of rental payment at their EBI review.
- A tenant in good standing according to Residential Tenancies Act.

**Direct Shelter Subsidy will cease:**

- The month following the month in which eligibility for social assistance or rent geared to income or affordable housing eligibility ceases.
- When the applicant fails to provide verification that rent has been paid.
- When a notice to vacate for non-payment of rent is received.

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- When the applicant moves out of the current residence, in these cases future eligibility for Direct Shelter Subsidy will be based on the new residence and availability of funds within the Direct Shelter Subsidy program.
- Upon 60 days' notice, should funding for this Direct Shelter Subsidy program terminate.
- When a client has been in receipt for approximately 30 months depending on their circumstances and based on CHPI guidelines when using CHPI funding.

### **Business Procedure**

- Spreadsheets have been created to assist staff in determining eligibility and the amount of benefit payable to an eligible household.
- The Integrated Social Services Department will review all applicants on the DSB Housing waiting list to identify households that may be eligible for a Direct Shelter Subsidy
- All possible DSS recipients, will complete the Housing Subsidy Verification form. Once the form is complete, the applicant will be added to the waiting list.
- In the case of low income families, the Direct Deposit Form must be completed, and a copy of a VOID cheque is required.
- If there are no units available in the area requested, then they will be considered for the Direct Shelter Subsidy program. This will also apply to all current DSB community housing applicants that are currently on the waitlist.
- For social assistance recipients, the Direct Shelter Subsidy provided will be calculated by determining the difference between the Ontario Works or Ontario Disability Support Program shelter maximum and the total actual shelter costs paid by the applicant on a monthly basis.
- For Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program recipients, the shelter amount used to calculate the DSS will be retrieved by using the computer software program.
- For low income families, the Direct Shelter Subsidy provided will be calculated by determining the difference between the rent geared to income calculation or

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affordable housing calculation and the actual market rent of the unit.

- **Please scan the request into the electronic filing system in the Non-Shareable Programs Folder (NSP) and follow the [Workflow Job Aide](#).**
- The Program Supervisor reviews the application for Direct Shelter Subsidy.
- After the Program Supervisor reviews the request, they will forward the approval/denial to the Case Manager for OW and ODSP. For Non-SAR recipients, OWS the Supervisor forwards the approval to the IPA who will create the approval/denial letter. If approved, the payment is then paid via Finance after the Administrative Assistant logs the information on a spreadsheet.
- The Administrative Assistant logs the information on a spreadsheet for tracking purposes of all recipients who qualify for DSS and updates the social housing waitlist to put their status to 'housed'.
- For social assistance recipients, the CM will create the benefit in the social assistance computer
  - Non-Shareable - Shelter Fund Enhancement
    - Frequency – Ongoing
    - Add to monthly assistance
    - Start Date = 1<sup>st</sup> day of the month as approved on Direct Shelter Subsidy application form
    - End Date = last day of the month 12 months later
- For low income families, the Administrative Assistant will send the following information via email/scan to Finance for payment processing:
  - recipient's address
  - a copy of the recipient's VOID cheque and completed Direct Deposit Form
- 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.

Approved applications for Low Income Families received and approved on or prior to the 20th day of the month will be paid on the first of the following month. Any applications approved after this date will begin receiving the benefit in the 2nd month following.

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- A letter will be sent to all clients with information about their eligibility.

### **Verification of Shelter Cost**

- All DSS recipients will be required to provide proof of a rent receipt every 6 months. For SAR recipients, a task will be input into the Case Manager's outlook calendar for follow-up and for non-SAR recipients, the AA will follow up when she reconciles the log on a monthly basis.
- For low income families, a re-occurring batch will be sent by Finance to the Community Housing Program Supervisor for review prior to processing. If any changes are made to the re-occurring batch, the Community Housing Program Supervisor will advise Finance of the change.
- DSS will be reassessed annually with an annual income review.

### **Community housing Centralized Waiting List**

Applicants qualifying for the program and are deemed to be housed once in receipt of a Direct Shelter Subsidy. Recipients of the Direct Shelter Subsidy may reapply for housing at any time after being granted DSS.

### **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.