



Report To: Program Planning Committee
From: Lori Clark, Director of Integrated Social Services (A)
Date: September 23, 2021
Re: Social Services Relief Fund Phase 4 – Issue Report

Purpose

To provide the Board with an update on the Social Services Relief Fund (SSRF) Phase 4 Business Case that was [announced](#) by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing on August 16, 2021.

Background

In 2020, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing announced \$362 million in new funding under a second phase of the SSRF to help protect vulnerable people from COVID-19, bringing the government's total SSRF investment to \$510 million. This funding has helped Service Managers and Indigenous Program Administrators respond quickly, adapt services, and help address housing and economic impacts from COVID-19 in their communities.

[SSRF Phase 1](#) which was announced on April 1, 2020, was intended to support a range of vulnerable populations, including people living in community housing, supportive housing, people with low incomes, social assistance recipients, and others who require social services support as well as those experiencing homelessness.

[SSRF Phase 2](#) which announced on August 10, 2020, was built on this support, and expanded the eligible uses of funding, with a focus on resiliency to future waves of COVID-19. It had the following objectives:

1. Mitigate ongoing risk for vulnerable people, especially in congregate care settings.
2. Encourage longer-term housing-based solutions to homelessness post-COVID-19; and
3. Enhance rent assistance provided to households in rent arrears due to COVID-19.

Building on these investments, the SSRF Phase 3 will provide \$255 million in additional one-time operating funding. This investment will enable Service Managers and Indigenous Program Administrators to continue to fund the vital supports and services

that were established to address the impacts of COVID-19 on vulnerable Ontarians from March 1, 2021 to December 31, 2021. The intention of SSRF Phase 3 is to continue to help a diverse range of vulnerable people to meet their short-term critical needs, including people living in community housing, supportive housing, people with low incomes, social assistance recipients, or others who require social services support as well as those that are experiencing homelessness.

[SSRF Phase 3](#) which was announced on March 10, 2021, was to protect the health and well-being of Ontarians and has been the government's number one priority throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. They also recognized the need for the funding to continue beyond March 31, 2021.

SSRF Phase 4 (which include a COCHI allocation)

On August 16, 2021, the Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB board chair received important [details](#) regarding additional provincial funding being offered to us through the fourth phase of Ontario's Social Services Relief Fund and through the Canada-Ontario Community Housing Initiative (COCHI).

To receive this funding, the Ministry required a completed Investment Plan for SSRF and a completed Investment Plan for COCHI. They required our sign back to the terms and conditions of the funding by September 15, 2021.

A - [SSRF Investment Plan](#)

The province recognizes the continued need to protect the health and well-being of Ontarians and that has been our government's number one priority throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

Under the fourth and final phase of the SSRF, \$286.4 million will be provided in additional one-time operating and capital funding, bringing the government's total SSRF investment to just over \$1 billion. This final phase of SSRF funding will enable us to continue to support the vital services that were established to address the impacts of COVID-19 on vulnerable Ontarians, while ensuring an orderly winddown of provincial supports as the SSRF comes to an end.

The Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB will receive an additional **\$1,103,700** in provincial funding through a fourth phase of Ontario's SSRF for the 2021-2022 fiscal year.

Under the SSRF Phase 4 envelope, capital projects are eligible for funding similar to SSRF Phase 2 funding.

An investment plan has been created and submitted to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing in a short turnaround time.

The Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB staff identified the following priorities in the SSRF Phase 4 investment plan:

1. The Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB wants to purchase the other part of the land that we are currently in the process of acquiring for the newly build Manitoulin Family Resources Thrift Store/Food Bank. Acquiring this land would allow MFR to increase capacity while adhering to COVID-19 protocols. The estimated cost for this will be **\$100,000**.
2. The capital funding would also be utilized to create long-term affordable housing in Little Current. There is a high need for senior's housing that is currently being under supported. We are short in meeting our targets as well as being short in adhering to our 10 Year Housing and Homelessness Plan recommendations. We are currently in the process of undertaking a new senior's housing building in Little Current to assist in alleviating the high demand in the area and to lessen the affordable housing deficit on Manitoulin Island. In discussions with the project architect and project manager it has come to our attention that the construction industry has come under increased pressure due to the pandemic which has resulted in significant price escalation for building materials. These escalations have resulted in a significant increase in the cost/sqft for the building. This has resulted in a significant cost increase to undertake this project and has strained the DSB's financial resources in moving forward with the project. With the **\$1,030,700** of SSRF Phase 4 Capital Funds, our annual deficit would go from \$171,132 to \$118,353.

B - COCHI Investment Plan

To help sustain, repair and grow the community housing sector, our government introduced the Community Housing Renewal Strategy in 2019. Under this strategy and in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, they allocated almost \$1.8 billion to the sector in 2020-21, and project to invest up to \$1.3 billion in 2021-22.

Despite these investments, they recognize there are continued challenges faced by community housing providers across Ontario, including the state of repair of the legacy social housing stock.

A key program to support our community housing providers has been the COCHI program. The Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB will receive an additional funding allocation of **\$84,100** under COCHI for the 2021-22 fiscal year.

This funding is in addition to the 2021-22 COCHI allocation of \$203,673 that was communicated to us through the Ministry's [letter](#) in May 2021, bringing our total 2021-22 funding for COCHI to \$287,773.

An Investment Plan has been created and submitted to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing in a short turnaround time.

Once Administration dollars have been deducted from the allocation, the Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB staff identified the following priorities in the COCHI investment plan:

1. Gore Bay Non-Profit – Accessible Bath Tubs - planned for 23-25 units. The estimated cost will be **\$13,000**.
2. Espanola Non-Profit – Fire Rated door closers – accessibility for 30 units. The estimated cost will be **\$20,000**.
3. DSB Manitowaning – 16 Units Main Electrical switch replacement. The estimated cost will be **\$46,895**.

Conclusion

We currently await the Ministry's response to our SSRF and COCHI Investment plans. Staff are recommending the Board approve the SSRF Phase 4 Investment Plan totaling \$1,130,700 and the COCHI Investment Plan totaling \$84,100 as submitted to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Staff will keep the board apprised of any new developments with this funding.