



## MEDIA RELEASE

### *TBDSSAB Provides Update on COVID-19 Pandemic Response*

**April 16, 2020** – The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board (TBDSSAB) is implementing a number of initiatives to provide relief to the vulnerable populations of the District of Thunder Bay.

As part of the Social Services Relief Fund from the Province of Ontario, TBDSSAB has expanded the availability of Ontario Works Emergency Assistance, enabling the immediate provision of financial assistance to applicants for basic needs, shelter and benefits.

Ontario Works Discretionary Benefits have also been expanded to provide assistance for extraordinary expenses related to COVID-19, such as personal protective equipment or cleaning supplies. Requests are being fulfilled for \$50 for singles and \$100 for families to assist with these extra expenses.

TBDSSAB has partnered with community organizations to create an isolation hotel program for people at risk of or experiencing homelessness, as well as an overflow shelter program to ensure safe places for homeless individuals to stay. This program is in partnership with community agencies to provide supports to people who need to isolate or be quarantined.

The Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI) Emergency Pandemic Relief Fund has been established to provide financial support to organizations that are suffering increased or new costs in supporting people experiencing homelessness or preventing homelessness due to COVID-19. Information and applications are available on the TBDSSAB website.

Outreach and support have been increased in TBDSSAB-owned housing, as well as with non-profit housing providers. Staff is working with community partners to deliver weekly food baskets to those in need.

TBDSSAB will also be offering Emergency Child Care Services to critical essential workers who have no other child care options. Centres will be located in the City of Thunder Bay and in Geraldton, and services will be provincially funded at no cost to families. Applications will open on Friday, April 17, 2020.

“The safest place for children is at home,” says Ken Ranta, Director, Integrated Social Services. “However, for essential workers that have no other option, we are happy to provide quality child care at no cost to families.”



**THE DISTRICT OF THUNDER BAY  
SOCIAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION BOARD**

During the pandemic, TBDSSAB continues to support TBDSSAB-owned and non-profit Community Housing programs, Ontario Works clients, child care providers, food security programs, homeless shelters, and other funded community agencies.

Information about COVID-19 programs and services can be found at [www.tbdssab.ca/covid-19-response](http://www.tbdssab.ca/covid-19-response).

“TBDSSAB is working to alleviate the pressure placed on the most vulnerable populations in the District of Thunder Bay by the current emergency situation, while simultaneously providing support to clients and community agencies as usual,” says TBDSSAB CAO Bill Bradica. “These new programs, supported by the Social Services Relief Fund from the Province of Ontario, will help to relieve financial strain and prevent homelessness caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.”

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