



BOARD REPORT

REPORT No.: 2025-06

MEETING DATE: FEBRUARY 20, 2025

SUBJECT: ADVOCACY & ENGAGEMENT ANNUAL UPDATE

RECOMMENDATION

For information only.

REPORT SUMMARY

To provide the District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board (TBDSSAB or the Board) with an annual update on advocacy and engagement activities completed by the Board and/or Administration.

BACKGROUND

The Board approved an Advocacy & Engagement Policy & Procedure in September 2021, by Resolution 21/58.

The purpose of the Advocacy and Engagement Policy and Procedure is to establish a clear and consistent framework to guide The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board with the planning, implementation, and tracking of advocacy and engagement activities.

COMMENTS

The table below summarizes initiatives undertaken in 2024. Highlights:

1. **Housing Service System.** In 2024, TBDSSAB continued to work with community partners to increase the variety of available spaces across the housing continuum. In 2024, 123 transitional housing spaces were announced, and shelter spaces were increased by 40 spots.
2. **Reconciliation & Inclusion.** During 2024, TBDSSAB continued to work toward the objectives in the Situation Analysis Implementation Plan by holding consultation sessions with Community Partner Organizations. The TBDSSAB Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Table expanded its scope to include staff

engagement activities to raise awareness about a variety of topics impacting equity-seeking groups.

3. **Humanizing Human Services.** The impacts of stigma and negative societal attitudes towards low-income and homeless populations are a key priority in TBDSSAB’s 2024-27 Strategic Plan. Following this strategic direction, 2024 saw the implementation of engagement strategies for people with lived and living experience, as well as a new partnership with Magnus Theatre through their Collective Creation Project.

Table 1: Summary of Advocacy and Engagement Activities

Topics	Activities (organized by headings in <i>Advocacy and Engagement Procedure</i> framework)
<p>1) Housing & Homelessness Service System</p> <p><i>Activities related to supporting (and strengthening) the housing and homelessness prevention system.</i></p>	<p>Internal Change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asset & Risk Officer position moved to Integrated Social Services Division to strengthen internal processes <p>Public Engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media Release and Impact Highlights shared for National Housing Day • Conducted biannual Tenant Satisfaction Survey <p>Community Collaboration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HPP Advisory Table • Supported community partners in the transition to by-names list and reporting changes. <p>Formal Partnerships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letters of Support: City of Thunder Bay Homelessness Plan <p>Local Service System</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changed seniors’ designation on two buildings based on assessment of housing stock and demand • Funding partnerships for Transitional/Supportive housing units. # Spaces Added in 2024: 123 • Increased funding for Emergency Shelter spaces. # Spaces Added in 2024: 40 <p>Broader Service System</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participated in OMSSA/AMO/NOSDA HelpSeeker homelessness data research project

	<p>Policy Advocacy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ROMA 2024: Position papers and delegation meetings requested related to Canada Ontario Community Housing Initiative Funding Formula (PDF) and Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative Allocation (PDF) AMO 2024: Position papers and delegation meetings requested related to COCHI OPHI COHB (PDF), LTB Wait Times (PDF), Supportive Housing (PDF) Letter from Chair to local MPs re: National Housing Strategy Funding
<p>2) Child Care & Early Years System</p> <p><i>Activities related to supporting (and strengthening) the child care and early years' service system.</i></p>	<p>Public engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Media Release and Impact Highlights shared for CCW & ECE Appreciation Day Resources developed and shared for families to recognize CCW & ECE Appreciation Day <p>Community Collaboration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CCEY Advisory Table <p>Local Service System</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professional Learning Day hosted for educators from across the District of Thunder Bay Administrative supports introduced to the Child Care and EarlyON leadership networks Ongoing funding agreements with Confederation College to support recruitment and retention of educators <p>Broader Service System</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participated and supported data collection for "Knowing our Numbers" project <p>Policy Advocacy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ROMA 2024: Position papers and delegation meetings requested related to Funding Guidelines Planning Time (PDF) and Workforce Retention (PDF)
<p>3) Social Assistance Programs</p> <p><i>Activities related to addressing local social</i></p>	<p>Local Service System</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engaged with community employment partners to prepare for provincial employment system transformation to commence 2025

<p><i>assistance service needs.</i></p>	<p>Policy Advocacy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ROMA 2024: Position papers and delegation meetings requested related to Social Assistance Shelter Rates (PDF) • AMO 2024: Position papers and delegation meetings requested related to Social Assistance Modernization (PDF) • Letter from Chair to Premier and Minister MMAH re: Social Assistance Rates and Common Assessment Tool (TBDSSAB Resolution No. 24/15)
<p>4) Reconciliation & Inclusion</p> <p><i>Activities related to creating a culture of inclusion at TBDSSAB.</i></p>	<p>Internal Change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognition of DEI events internally via DEI Table <p>Reflective Practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging training added to mandatory staff training • DEI education offered to all staff (ongoing) <p>Public Engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement sessions held with Indigenous-led community partner organizations to provide guidance on the “Situation Analysis Implementation Plan” and input on the formation of an Indigenous Advisory Table to the Board. Five consultation sessions held in 2024. Consultations are ongoing. <p>Community Participation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flag raised for Pride month • Flag raised for National Day for Truth and Reconciliation
<p>5) Humanizing Human Services</p> <p><i>Activities related to engaging with service recipients and the public using a compassionate and person-centered approach</i></p>	<p>Reflective Practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food and drink available in the Intake area <p>Internal Change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed tools to support trauma-informed engagement and storytelling with people with lived and living experience (PWLLE) • Created compensation process for engaging PWLLE • Introduced ‘Plain and Welcoming Language’ reviews <p>Public Engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications strategy updated to more directly promote compassion and understanding about the circumstances impacting people we serve

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key messages in media interviews, statements, and speaking notes include appeals to compassion and recognition of the people impacted <p>Community Participation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bronze Sponsor for Rockin’ Recovery event via Thunder Bay Drug Strategy <p>Formal Partnerships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Partner on Magnus Theatre Collective Creation Project for 2024-25 on the topic of poverty • Letter of Support for Thunder Bay Art Gallery Seniors Accessibility Initiative grant application
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STRATEGIC PLAN IMPACT

This report is related to the objectives included in TBDSSAB’s 2020-2023 Strategic Plan under: “Advocate for our local, flexible solutions”, as well as objectives included in the 2024-2027 Strategic Plan under: “Encouraging Advocacy and Awareness”.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS



There are no financial implications related to this report.

CONCLUSION

It is concluded that the annual Advocacy and Engagement update be received as presented.

REFERENCE MATERIALS

None

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