

To: Multi Minutes Delegation during ROMA Conference January 2023

From: FONOM Board

Date: January 13, 2023

Subject: Lobbying for more Housing Dollars from Federal Government

ISSUE:

FONOM recognizes that the Province is working on the Housing Challenge in Ontario. In large part, the legislature passed Bill 23 to address the real challenges outside Northern Ontario. As Municipalities work through their current budget cycle, we will get a better sense of the financial impact it will be on our members. But the District Social Admissions Boards in Northern Ontario still have an affordable housing challenge that we would ask for more help than previously provided from the Province.

RECOMMENDATION:

FONOM recommends that the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing advocate for a larger share of the Provincial Affordable Housing dollar spent in Northern Ontario.

ANALYSIS:

Your government, our municipal governments, DSSABs, and the on-the-ground agency are spending unprecedented monies to help most homeless with their emotional challenges and find those who want Housing a safe place. But as all know, the need is growing, and the conditions are unique in each part of the Province.

There are projects across the North that, if operationally funded, will go a long way to help! Also, we encourage the Ministry to continue dialogue with the Federal government to get a better percentage for Ontario.

The Minister has said there is a need for affordable housing in Ontario. The Northern Policy Institute's report ***More than Just a Number: Addressing the Homelessness, Addiction, and Mental Health Crisis in the North*** shows there is a great and unique need in Northern Ontario¹.

The DSSABs do not have the financial capacity to fund affordable housing; an example previously shared shows the Northern ability to pay. The **Manitoulin-Sudbury District Services Board** just awarded a contract for **12-unit** seniors complex in NEMI, Little Current. The Manitoulin-Sudbury District Services Board has an annual budget for all programs of **\$41,787,617** (2022 Budget), and the funding for this housing project is **\$6,040,000**, 15% of their yearly budget.

The housing stock in Northern Ontario is old! Even though the Housing Units have continued upkeep and repair, they are not holding up. A community cannot afford to lose any of these homes, so we would like the provincial government to consider long-term funding for capital repairs on existing community housing units to maintain the current affordable housing stock in the North.

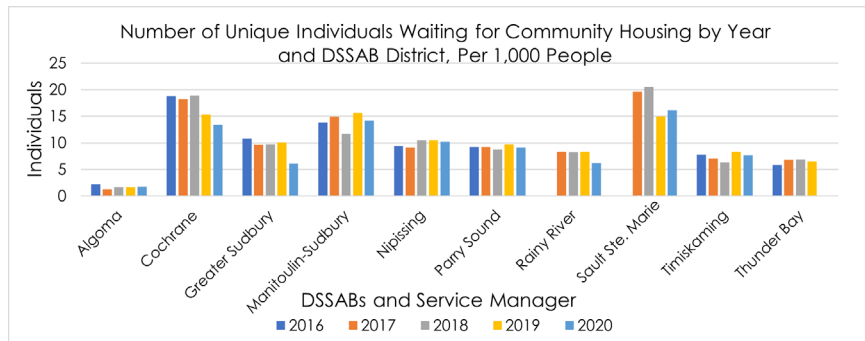
We can not emphasize enough the importance of culturally appropriate Indigenous community housing facilities to our communities.² There are countless examples of housing facilities that enrich residents' lives, and we want to ensure more are funded and built, as the need is also continuing to grow.

We have sat in rooms like this and on Zoom and heard Minister Clark say that he was advocating for a more significant portion of the Federal funding. Minister Clark's speech at last year's AMO Conference stated, *"We need our municipal partners to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with us and urge the federal government to pay its fair share, so we can continue working together to deliver supports and resources to vulnerable population³."*

FONOM has offered our help in that advocacy by mobilizing our members and working with the other Municipal associations to aid the Province in their advocacy with the Federal Government. In addition, FONOM has reached out to the Ministry Staff to ask about the best way to aid the Province and the Ministry and wording for resolutions that would not hinder the Provincial Advocacy.

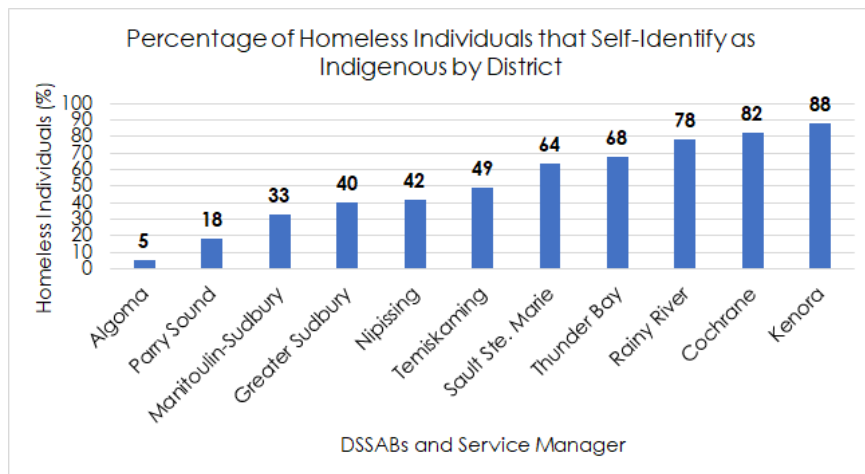
Knowing we all understand the current and future needs, FONOM would like a clear understanding of where the discussions with the Federal Government are. Also, we would like to formalize our assistance to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing in your advocacy with the Federal Government.

² More than Just a Number: Addressing the Homelessness, Addiction, and Mental Health Crisis in the North – page 15 - August 2022



Source: Author's calculations from direct outreach to DSSABs and the City of Greater Sudbury, and Statistics Canada Census Division Population Projections for the corresponding years.

³ More than Just a Number: Addressing the Homelessness, Addiction, and Mental Health Crisis in the North – page 18 - August 2022



Source: 2021 enumeration reports from DSSABs and City of Greater Sudbury. Note: Thunder Bay is based on 2018 data.

³ Ontario Newsroom: August 16, 2022 - Minister Steve Clark's Speech at the 2022 Association of Municipalities of Ontario Conference

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From: FONOM Board

Date: January 13, 2023

Subject: Northern Ontario Resource Development Support Fund (NORDS)

ISSUE:

FONOM wishes to again thank the Minister of Northern Development for providing the benefits or resource development funding to Northern Ontario Municipalities. The funding is having an immediate impact on Municipal Capital Assets.

RECOMMENDATION:

FONOM recommends that the Minister of the Ministry of Northern Development review, with the leadership of FONOM and NOMA, the Northern Ontario Resource Development Support program, to make the program permanent immediately.

ANALYSIS:

As a part of the government's Building Ontario plan, the Ministry of Northern Development is providing \$15 million annually to northern municipalities to help support infrastructure projects over the next five years. The new Northern Ontario Resource Development Support (NORDS) Fund will share the benefits of mining and forestry with municipalities and complement existing funding streams for building infrastructure.¹

Recently all Municipalities completed their Asset Management Plans, with most finding the deficits larger than expected. Also, a new pressure, the influx of citizens to the Region from the populated, highly serviced areas of the South,

demands higher infrastructure standards than previously asked. The Municipalities in Northern Ontario, whose infrastructure is negatively impacted by mining or forestry operations, can use the funds and municipal taxation to address a local issue. Further, a Municipality can stack the funds for multiple years to manage a larger project.

We surveyed our membership for their opinion of the Pilot Project. We were not surprised to hear that the Provincial Staff were highly beneficial in addressing Municipal Staff questions and helping to complete the first application. Also noted by several were that without the Project funding, larger necessary projects could not be done, as the smaller municipalities did not have the financial ability to address more significant infrastructure unless negatively impacting almost all the smaller projects. Members mentioned they are already using the funds in their Capital Forecasting for the regular maintenance schedule of the affected roads.

Our members would like the Ministry to make a few improvements: the Banked Interest not being deducted in the following year's transfer and making the annual reporting more straightforward if you are not expensing funds for an approved project until year five.

For many years FONOM and Municipalities have been asking for reliable, stable, unincumbered Capital Funding to help address their infrastructure deficits. This Pilot Project and funding, like OCIF, positively impact small, rural, and northern communities. The Minister and their Ministries should be proud of creating the Northern Ontario Resource Development Support program.

Again, on behalf of the FONOM membership, we thank the Province for this Fund. We encourage your government to make this a permanent program, so our members can budget their five- or ten-year infrastructure plans free of resource extraction impacts.

To: Multi Minister Delegation during ROMA Conference January 2023

From: FONOM Board

Date: January 13, 2023

Subject: Revisit the decision to cut fees for Virtual Health Care and increase the fees for Health Care LOCUM in Underserved areas of Northern and Rural Ontario

ISSUE:

FONOM again thanks the Province for increasing enrollment at the Northern School of Medicine (NOSM). We have received concerns from several of our members regarding the lack of Physicians in communities throughout Northeastern Ontario. It is not just a retirement that is causing the pressure, but also the negative impacts to life-work balance, both on the Physician but their families.

We want to share with the Ministry that their decision to reduce the fees for Virtual Doctor appointments is putting pressure on an already stressed Health Care system in Northern Ontario. Many citizens in the North need a family doctor in their community and have to travel long distances between communities to visit an emergency room. The Government's decision to allow pharmacies to prescribe medication for 13 minor illnesses will help. The Virtual visits for those in Northern and Rural underserved communities to have access to a Doctor. If no Doctor is available in Hoynepayne, the emergency rooms at the Lady Dunn Health Centre in Wawa (192 km) or the Sault Area Hospital (410 km) in Sault Ste Marie are far away in any weather. **FONOM would ask the Ministry of Health to renegotiate with the Ontario Medical Association to increase fees paid to doctors for virtual visits with patient visits from Northern and Remote underserved areas.**

Also, we are hearing that Northern Hospitals are having challenges recruiting Health Care Professionals to Northern Ontario Hospitals. In 1990 the Province established the Physician need for each Hospital, which we understand based on

population. An increase workload at Northern Hospitals is having a negative impact on a Physicians a life-work balance. The Graduates from the Northern School of Medicine have a positive effect on the challenges we have, but there is a need and assistance is required. **We would ask the Province to review the number of Physicians required per Hospital in Northern and Rural Communities, respecting the Mental Health of the Physician and their families.**

Often Hospitals and Physicians will use Locums to provide assistance and relief. But it is becoming increasingly challenging to attract Physicians due to the outdated fees (mileage, housing, per diem) for those signing a Locum contract. Presently the Ministry is reviewing the Locum contract process. We hope the current review will streamline the time that the Locum contract takes to be completed, processed, and make payments significantly reduced. The fee structure also needs a review to reflect the inflationary realities. **FONOM would ask the Ministry of Health to renegotiate with the Ontario Medical Association to increase fees paid to doctors for Locums in Northern and Remote underserved areas.**