

THE DISTRICT OF TIMISKAMING SOCIAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION BOARD



2nd Quarter Operational Overview April 1 – June 30, 2020

CAO Report to the Board

Kelly Black, Chief Administrative Officer

EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

The second quarter of 2020 will be remembered as the period where EMS services and Paramedics across Canada began to learn what the COVID 19 new normal response plan for the future will look like. Protocols, directives and procedures were constantly being updated and changing at some points on a daily and even hourly basis as we all struggled to know what the new best practice was in order to decrease the spread of COVID 19 and fight this pandemic.

Below is a recapture of the marked events that occurred in the second quarter. As a general note, a lot of planned events and meetings were cancelled and/or rescheduled due to COVID 19 restrictions. These included: all formal gatherings, in class training, the Annual Spring Paramedic Chiefs Conference, as well as SEIU contract negotiations had to be postponed until August of 2020.

- Newly introduced weekly Tuesday night town hall zoom virtual meetings of all Paramedic Chiefs across Ontario were conducted every week during COVID 19's initial presence in our province. Also, in attendance were the Ministry of Health ambulance senior managers/directors Alison Blair and Steve Haddad. The scheduling of these meetings now continues on a bi-weekly basis. These meetings allowed the EMS Chief to receive immediate live updates from the provincial offices that directed us through the pandemic and allowed us to ask any questions that we had or for assistance with any problems that we were facing. These meetings proved to develop resolutions to several problems Timiskaming EMS was faced with during the pandemic and allowed us to continue to provide the best frontline emergency service throughout all aspects of COVID 19.
- 3 new part-time district position paramedics were hired in February to join the paramedic team. These 3 new paramedics were forced to be delayed in receiving their final certification procedures due to COVID 19 restrictions. We are happy to report that all 3 have now received the required local service orientation and provincial testing required to join our frontline team. We proudly welcome new paramedics: Lucas Gagne, Austin Willard, and D'Aundra Dewar to our frontline team and look forward to having them.

New EMS Fleet Vehicle Update

The remote response unit and trailer experienced further delays due to COVID 19 and therefore delivery was delayed in the second quarter time period. Recently as of the production of this quarterly report, Timiskaming EMS has now received the completed enclosed trailer, as well as, the off-road response unit. It currently is undergoing a few final steps in terms of a rear tarp enclosure to be added, as well as, graphics to the off-road unit. Final completion is anticipated within the next month at which time training procedures and curriculum will be finalized and administered.

The two new ambulances were expected for final delivery in September of 2020; however, through a welcomed surprise, the vehicles' production was several months ahead of schedule and landed in our area the first week of August. Inspections and preservice procedures are being finalized with the anticipation that these trucks will be utilized as frontline ambulances within the next month to month and a half time period.

Unfortunately the new Chevrolet HD 2500 pickup truck paramedic response unit ordered under the funds transferred from the 2019 budget that was scheduled to arrive in April of 2020, has faced yet another uncontrollable delay due to the fact the GMC production line was suspended in the USA when they were hit so hard with COVID 19 outbreaks. We are still patiently awaiting a further update as to when the pickup truck will be delivered to Rowlands Emergency Products in Mississauga where it will undergo its retrofit process to develop it into a paramedic response unit.

COVID 19 Pandemic

Overall, the COVID 19 response by Timiskaming EMS went very well despite some very challenging days to ensure that the emergency care continued at the highest quality level possible during the pandemic. We are now adjusting to our new normal level of operations and develop future plans to be ready for any further increases in COVID cases developing in our area. There were times when our personal protection equipment supply chain was growing slim and we, like other EMS providers across Ontario, were facing extreme struggles to obtain a continual supply of PPE. With much success, we continued to be able to always provide an uninterrupted supply of PPE to our frontline paramedics. The addition of reusable half mask respirators and full face reusable shields that were personally issued to each paramedic, although proved to be an unexpected costly expense, they did ensure that no paramedic was without proper high level respiratory and droplet protection to combat COVID 19 on the frontlines.

Timiskaming EMS received excellent support from the Timiskaming Health Unit throughout the entire pandemic and worked very closely with Acting Medical Officer of Health Dr. Glenn Corneil, as well as, all of his public health team members. Pride should be taken by everyone involved with fighting this pandemic because the District of Timiskaming proved to be one of the lowest infected areas in terms of positive COVID 19 cases found and none of those cases resulted in death. This was due to a joint effort by all healthcare providers in this area and rolls right down to the everyday citizen being responsible for following the public health recommendations. Be proud that we live in Timiskaming District and be proud of our COVID 19 local response.

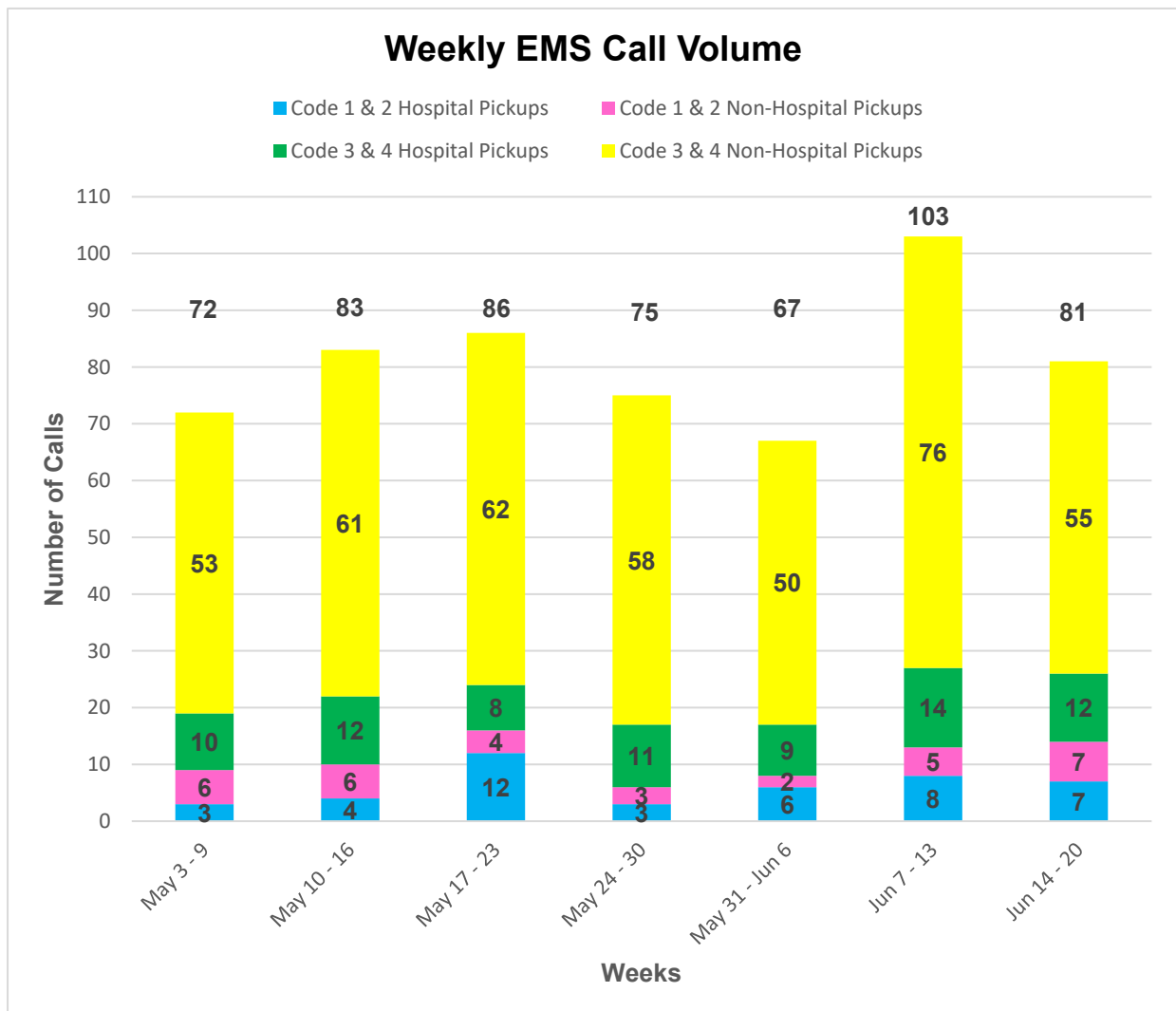
EMS CALL VOLUME

Call volume for the second quarter has shown a very marked decrease in total responses; however, most of this decrease is shown in the area of transfers. The EMS department has recognized this lowering of transfers and such is primarily due to the fact many non-urgent procedures were cancelled during the height of the COVID outbreak period. There has recently, in the last few weeks, been a visible increase in the weekly call volume.

When comparing weekly averages, the first period of pre-COVID had a volume around the average of 80 to 90 calls a week. During the onset and presence of COVID, this weekly call average dropped to 68 to 72 calls and in this last period of May and June the weekly call volume is beginning to climb back up with a weekly average of 81 calls and a high of 103 calls seen during one week in June.

It should also be noted that our provincial response time standard report, observed during the second quarter of 2020, has been met or excessively exceeded at one of the highest levels ever seen before. This is due to a direct relationship to the fact that our ambulances are doing less calls and therefore are more readily available and are arriving to patients, in need of an ambulance for emergency care, faster in our area. In the severe cases of EMS response to sudden cardiac arrest and CTAS 1 seriously ill and injured patients, the paramedics are arriving at the scene of the patients in the values of 20 to 27 percent faster than they were before the pandemic developed.

This strengthens our previous plan to show proof that the ambulance service should be reserved first and foremost to perform frontline emergency responses and limit the amount of non-urgent transfers that we respond to. This data is proof that when the paramedics are not performing non urgent transfers, they are situated to be able to provide faster emergency response to all parts of our community.



EMS CALL VOLUME CHART for First Quarter of 2020				
Ambulance base	Non-Emergency	Emergency	Standby	Totals
North	105	402	102	609
Central	64	186	65	315
South	61	472	201	734
District totals	230	1,060	368	1,658

EMS CALL VOLUME CHART for Second Quarter of 2020				
Ambulance base	Non-Emerg	Emergency	Standby	Totals
North	76	393	102	571
Central	30	192	58	280
South	49	383	149	581
District totals	155	968	309	1,432

All Hospital Originated Calls for First Quarter of 2020			
Sending facility	Non Emerg	Emerg	Totals
KDH	48	56	104
EDH	34	22	56
Tem Hosp	42	53	95
Totals	124	131	255

All Hospital Originated Calls for Second Quarter of 2020			
Sending facility	Non Emerg	Emerg	Totals
KDH	29	37	66
EDH	11	51	62
Tem Hosp	28	33	61
Totals	68	121	189

2020 First Quarter Provincial Response Time Standard Report (values are %)			
Annual 2020	2020 Target	First Quarter of 2020	Variance +
Sudden Cardiac Arrest	35	47.00	12.00
1	50	50.00	0.00
2	65	72.03	7.03
3	75	84.36	9.36
4	80	87.02	7.02
5	90	91.36	1.36

2020 Second Quarter Provincial Response Time Standard Report (values are %)			
Annual 2020	2020 Target	Second Quarter of 2020	Variance +
Sudden Cardiac Arrest	35	61.50	26.50
1	50	69.23	19.23
2	65	69.92	4.92
3	75	77.23	2.23
4	80	82.63	2.63
5	90	92.08	2.08

ONTARIO WORKS

Below is a summary of the program's second quarter of 2020. During this time, the COVID-19 pandemic arrived. C-19 had an immediate impact on the Ontario Works programs due to the introduction of several benefits both in the Ontario Works program and other provincial and federal programs.

Funding to Individuals

Funding to Individuals: Expanding Emergency Assistance

The province has expanded access to emergency assistance under Ontario Works for those in financial crisis who have no access to other supports and those who are waiting for support from the federal government to become available. This funding will help to cover needs such as: food, rent, medicine, transportation and other services during this public health crisis.

Individuals can apply for this assistance online or through our Ontario Works offices. Measures to expand Emergency Assistance include:

- Suspending the rule that limits emergency assistance provision to only once in six months for individuals and families affected by COVID-19
- Allowing people to receive emergency assistance for longer (48 days) without submitting a full Ontario Works application

To manage increased demand, the Ministry developed a more streamlined and accessible application specifically for emergency assistance. There is a dedicated website for the Emergency Assistance application. In the interim, the Ministry has put in place a centralized team to help support increased inquiries regarding assistance and to support people to complete their applications. The online application data is populated into the SAMS software application and sent to local offices. With all data entry complete, our case management staff only need to review the data and determine eligibility and the amount of assistance paid. A completed application accurately entered into the system is done for our local program, representing substantial time savings. A fully automated system will be online and active before April.

Expanding Discretionary Benefits

The government has provided resources to enable frontline staff and delivery partners to offer additional discretionary benefits to those currently in receipt of social assistance. The province set amounts of \$100 for single persons and \$200 for families, and the timeframe for these benefits was originally for March and April 2020; however, this benefit will now continue until August 1st. This funding is issued with broad discretion to assist with the various and reasonable impacts our vulnerable population is facing, such as including cleaning supplies, transportation, food or clothing.

Social Services Relief Funding

Our DSSAB is eligible for \$571,700 in Social Services Relief Funding to support critical social services in the district. To ensure that this investment is delivered as quickly as possible and to provide maximum flexibility for local needs, funding flowed through the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI).

Fifty percent of our Social Services Relief Fund allocation will be issued in early April to respond to the COVID-19 crisis immediately and plan for the coming months. The intention is to allow our organization to help a diverse range of vulnerable people in need in our community. Some examples are financial support for: people living in community housing, supportive housing and those impacted by homelessness. Others include: individuals with low incomes, social assistance recipients, or citizens that require social services support, as well as, those that are experiencing impacts of homelessness. The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing has strongly encouraged providers to employ a broad interpretation of those populations while utilizing this funding.

Please note that as this pandemic crisis evolves, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing will continue to evaluate local needs and respond accordingly. Where necessary, the balance of our Social Services Relief Fund allocation may be subject to reallocation within the province or adjustment (increase or decrease) in the amount of funding during the year. This funding will cease on March 31st, 2021.

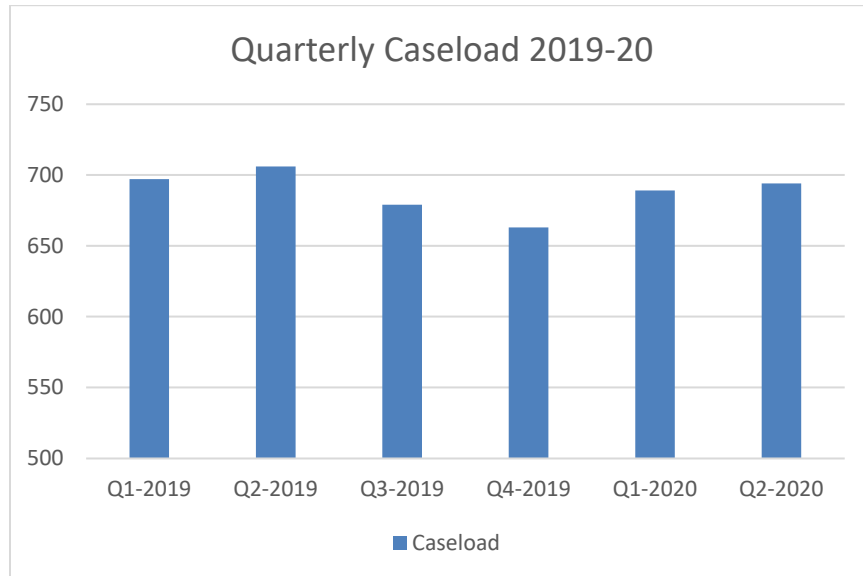
Programs funded during April, May, and June include:

- Kirkland Lake Food Bank
- New Liskeard Food Bank
- Pavilion
- Town of Kirkland Lake (Senior Focused Supports)
- City of Temiskaming Shores (Senior Focused Supports)
- Timiskaming DSSAB, Housing Services (Senior Tenant Supports)

We have participated in regular discussions (via Zoom) with community partners. We assist our partners in problem-solving and envisioning solutions and how their organizations can utilize this funding. In the next quarter, significant programs from the Canadian Mental Health Association and Timiskaming Health Unit will begin their implementation following grant issuance.

Ontario Works Caseload

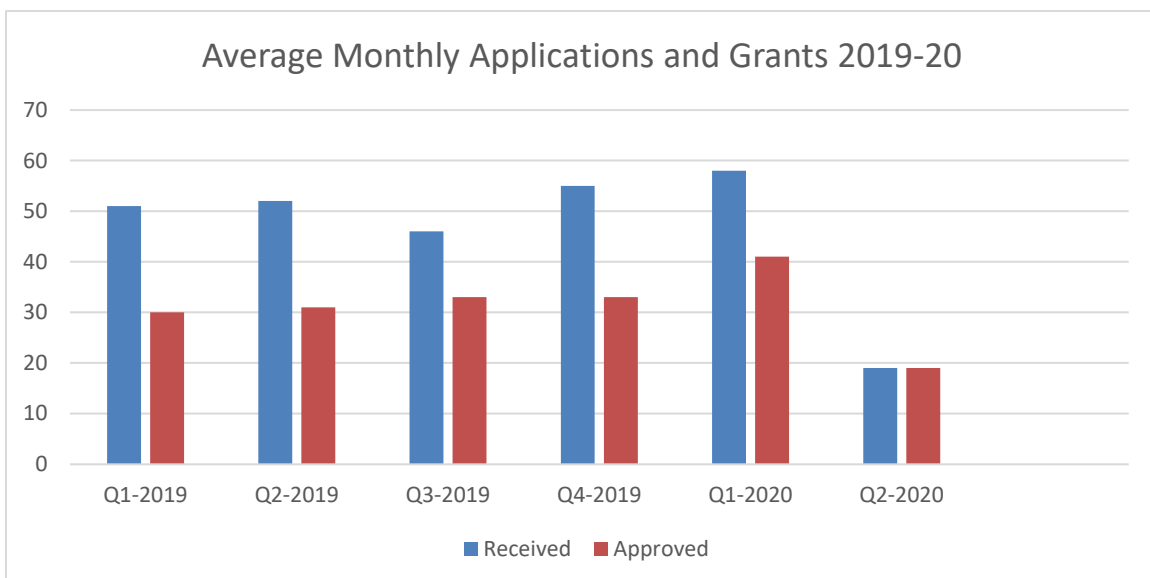
In the second quarter, the Ontario Works caseload average was 694 cases. Compared to last year at this time, the caseload has decreased by 1.7% from 702 cases.



Applications for Assistance

During the second quarter, we received an average of 19 applications per month; a decrease of 44% from 44-application average last year. This decrease is directly related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The number of applications approved averaged 19 per month in the first quarter and all applications were approved.



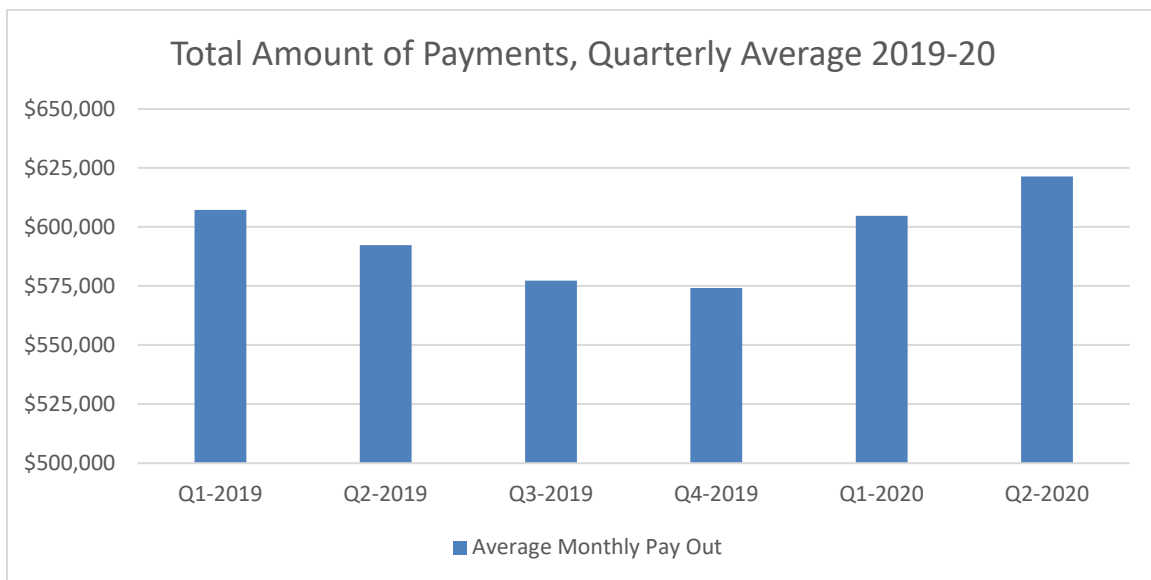
Employment Supports and Client Outcomes to Employment

With the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Ministry has suspended all outcomes requirements for Ontario Works delivery agents. There will be no funding impacts on the 2020 service cycle. The focus is on client support through basic financial assistance. As time progresses, our caseworker teams will remain in contact with clients and encourage continued employment support programs for: basic education (grade 12), skills development, and non-direct employment activities had at-home options.

Social Assistance Payments

The amount paid out in all social assistance benefits in the 2nd quarter averaged \$621,500 per month. The amount is a 3% increase from the same quarter last year. The monthly average cost per case was \$915 per case, a 4% increase from last year.

The reasons for this increase in the second quarter this year is attributed mainly to the Emergency Benefit (a \$100 and \$200 per month benefit to singles and families each month beginning in February 2020) due to COVID-19 hardships. The treatment of the CERB as earnings, allowing individuals to retain a portion without deduction, allowed individuals to continue to receive OW benefits.



Program Accountability

The Enhanced Verification Program (EVP) was suspended since March 2020 due to COVID-19. The Ministry scheduled to relaunch the program in June; however, this was delayed further. File reviews for previous cycles are being completed wherever possible. Appeals and Internal Reviews continued to be conducted. Fraud investigations are undergoing preliminary action and evidence gathering but without the fieldwork and in-person meetings and interrogations.

Note: we have opted to resume our audits in September voluntarily and informed the Ministry of such. Audit cases will be assigned to our office for the September 2020 cycle.

Program Operations

The Ontario Works program is at 100% of its staffing level.

Positions include:

- Eight Caseworkers (four per office)
- Two Case-Aides (one per office)
- One position focused on program integrity (Enhanced Verification Process, Fraud Investigations, Appeals, and Family Support)

Management include:

- Director for Client Services (program delivery, and front-line staff supervision)
- Ontario Works Supervisor will retire at the beginning of September and is taking vacation time over July and August. The Director of Client Services has: centralized program oversight, senior-level management and day to day service delivery and front line staff supervision in the interim. We are in the process of determining the next steps and the needs of program management at this time and considering future modernization and automation of social assistance delivery. Supervisory management, team leaders, continuous improvement strategies and decentralized decision making are all factors. The continued impact of COVID-19 on operations is also considered from a financial aspect for management level staffing cost.

During COVID-19, seven out of eight caseworkers are working remotely, from home. Support staff remain in-office. This shift in our work model was done per the organization's physical distancing requirements for health and safety.

All program staff made an outstanding transition to working remotely, increased autonomy and self-direction. All continue to provide support and assistance to our clients daily. Pre-pandemic timelines are met and often completed ahead of schedule. Staff are using this time to prepare and engage their clients in alternative employment supports, direct banking, the MyBenefits program and the upcoming Reloadable Payment Card and Electronic Document Management. July through September will introduce these modernization systems into our service.

HOUSING SERVICES

Housing Services Program Overview

Central Wait List

In the second quarter of 2020, our department saw 72 new applications for rent-geared-to-income housing and 6 reactivated applications. In comparison to last year's 2nd quarter, this is a 50.7% decrease. The reduction is believed to be a direct impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

We were able to house 27 applicant households. As of June 30, 2020, there were 291 eligible households on the waiting list; 39.51% of the households are considered seniors, 37.4% are single/couple households with no dependents and 23.1% are family households.

Table 1: Summary of New Applications and Households Housed

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
New Applications	117	119	129	142	129
Households housed	59	66	57	34	58

Unit Turnover for Public Housing Portfolio

During the second quarter of 2020 tenants moved out for several reasons. Routinely, the Housing Services Program sees fewer move outs during the winter months, however; there is still move-out activity during this period. Table 2 below outlines some of the reasons for tenants vacating our properties.

Table 2: Five Year Overview of Move Outs January through March

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Health Reasons	2	5	4	3	7
Left District	1	2	0	0	1
Move to Private Rental Market	3	1	1	2	3
Deceased	6	1	0	6	3
Evicted	1	1	1	1	0
Transfer	2	4	2	5	1
Non-Given	3	1	2	5	2
Employment	0	0	2	0	0
TOTAL	18	15	12	22	17

Unit Vacancy

Unit activity varies from year to year. In the second quarter of 2020 we saw 19 move-ins and 17 move-outs.

Table 3 below outlines move-ins and move-outs in the first quarter for the past 4 years.

Table 3: Unit Activity

Activity	2017	2018	2019	2020
Move-In	23	18	22	19
Move-Out	15	13	22	17

Capitol Jobs

The Board approved a Capital Repairs budget of \$766,803. As previous years, our capital budget is based on building condition assessments. Budget amounts vary from year to year depending on the cost of the required jobs. In the 2nd quarter of 2020, scheduled work included: roof repairs, building and elevator repairs, maintenance equipment replacement, as well as, safety systems. Painting of Common Rooms and Hallways of properties is nearing completion. As at June 30, 2020, the Housing Services Program is in line with spending predictions.

Provincially/Federally Funded Programs

Home for Good (HFG)

In May 2017, the DTSSAB submitted a response to the expression of interest issued by the Ministry of Housing for Home for Good (HFG) funding. In mid-September 2017 we received notification from the Ministry that we were successful and would be receiving funding in the amount of \$287,400 over 3 years as outlined in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Home for Good Allocation

	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020
Annual Allocation	\$63,560	\$111,920	\$111,920

The DTSSAB continues to partner with the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA).

Canada-Ontario Community Housing Initiative & Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative (COCHI & OPHI)

On April 17, 2019, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) released Service Manager allocations for the COCHI and OPHI Funding programs. Both COCHI and OPHI are new funding programs under the National Housing Strategy (NHS) and allocations will be released to Service Managers in three-year Phases. In this quarter, Allocations for year 2 were received.

Funding allocations Timiskaming received under Phase I – Year 2.

Table 5 Phase I COCHI and OPHI Funding

Program Name	Component	2020
Canada-Ontario Community Housing Initiative (COCHI)	Capital Projects/Repairs	\$65,077.00
Ontario Priority Housing Initiative (OPHI)	Ontario Renovates	\$60,730.00
	Home Ownership	\$80,000.00
	Rent Supplement	\$12,000.00
	Housing Support Services	\$8,485.00
Total		\$169,700.00

Social Infrastructure Fund (SIF) Housing Allowance

In June 2016 service managers received letters announcing allocations under the Social Infrastructure Fund (SIF) which is to be delivered under the Investment in Affordable Housing 2014 Extension (IAH-E) program as a joint initiative between the Provincial and Federal Governments. The additional funding is known as the Social Infrastructure Fund (SIF) and, as per program guidelines, service managers are required to meet the housing needs of the following:

- Supporting affordability for tenants in social housing buildings with expiring operating agreements and/or federal subsidies
- Seniors
- Persons with disabilities including adults with developmental disabilities
- Indigenous peoples
- Individuals who are chronically homeless
- Youth
- Preventing homelessness as individuals' transition from provincially funded institutions such as hospitals, correctional facilities and the child welfare system
- Projects that support transit corridor intensification and/or community hubs

Our allocation will be flowed in Year (3) 2019/2020 as illustrated in Table 6 below.

We continue to deliver SIF funding under the Housing Allowance component currently assisting over 12 households.

Table 6 below outlines the funding allocation for Timiskaming for a 6-year duration.

Table 6: SIF Housing Allowance Allocation

SIF Housing Allowance Funding					
2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
\$12,000	\$18,300	\$37,200	\$37,200	\$37,200	\$26,948

Housing Services Secure Building upgrades at 100 Market Street

In April 2018, the Board approved our new build located at 255 Grant Drive. This affordable housing project was funded by Year 1 and 2 of the Social Infrastructure Fund. The 8 units were completed and move-in ready in September 2019. Part of the initial plans included a garage and a gazebo. Construction of this phase has started during this quarter. Conditions in the Site Plan Control Agreement have also been met with the planting of rows of trees on three sides of the property. In addition to the enhancement of the property, the trees will also act as a wind break during the winter months.



In the 2nd quarter, the Housing Services Program continues implementing precautionary measures. Our primary concern is safety. Maintenance staff are practicing minimal interaction with tenants; however, when they are required to assist with tenant needs, protective equipment is worn prior to entering the unit. Tenants are also being screened prior to meeting with staff.



Building Custodians have been provided with t-shirts to increase awareness and promote physical distancing while they conduct their daily duties on DTSSAB property.

HUMAN RESOURCES

Human Resources Review – 2020 Initiatives/Activities (Q2)

Key non-confidential Human Resources Q2 initiatives and/or activities included, but were not limited to:

Assessment of COVID-19 Workplace Impacts

The pandemic has impacted our workplace in many ways that are positive and beneficial. Although several initiatives were officially interrupted due to COVID-19, effects of the pandemic have included:

- **Greater cross-functional collaboration**, i.e.: with the introduction of the Emergency Response Team, as one of many examples. More and more we are experiencing firsthand the benefits of working together instead of in silos, and this is strengthening working relationships; helping with building trust; improving decision-making practices; helping us explore new levels of outside-of-the-box thinking, creativity and untapped opportunities for innovation. This contributes positively to our workplace culture.
- **New ways of working** by using new technologies to support staff to work remotely and collaboratively; maintaining (and even improving) human connections with our teams through new virtual communication channels; finding alternative service delivery means; adjusting old processes to respond to our new realities. This contributes positively to our workplace culture.
- **Greater caring of others**, such as leaders and colleagues making it a priority to check-in on individuals' health, safety and wellbeing; empowering staff, with greater flexibility, autonomy and trust; collaborating to find mutually beneficial ways to adapt work, life and home responsibilities in response to the pandemic. This contributes positively to our workplace culture.
- **Insight into new expectations for our leaders**. The pandemic has taught us the importance of capabilities such as: flexibility, agility and resilience; the ability to navigate through ambiguity; the need to foster innovation; being able to manage change. Other critical leadership skillsets that have been exposed as a result of the pandemic include the ability to support team building and collaboration; demonstrating vulnerability and humility; empathy; building trust; having a mindset focused on employee safety, health and wellbeing. Working on this will positively contribute to the workplace culture.

Despite COVID-19 the DTSSAB has indirectly been making important improvements and positive workplace culture shifts. The pandemic has perhaps afforded us the opportunity to examine our goals, based on our Vision, Mission and Values, as well as our business priorities to help steer our strategic plans and actions for the future.

Summer Students – Housing

Two summer students were successfully onboarded, with a special emphasis on COVID-19 precautions.

2020 Q2 Recruitment & Staffing Summary

Closing date	Position	Recruitment status	Details & comments
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Staffing Update

- There were no recruitment activities between April and June 2020.
- In response to physical distancing requirements, as many office staff as operationally feasible were set up with remote work capabilities to work from home.