District of Nipissing
Social Services
Administration Board

Conseil d'administration
des servicessociaux
du districtde Nipissing

2022-2042 Strategic Plan

MISSION

Support accessible human services in Nipissing District.

VISION

Healthy, Sustainable Communities.

VALUES

Putting People First, Pro-Active, Collaboration, Empowerment, Innovation, Inclusion & Diversity.

Board Term 2023-2026

INTRODUCTION

The District of Nipissing Social Services Administration Board (DNSSAB) is the service delivery agency for essential human services to the residents of the Nipissing District. These include Ontario Works, Housing Services, Children's Services, and Paramedic Services. The jurisdiction of the DNSSAB covers a population of about 85,000 people, spread out over 17,000 square kilometers, 11 municipalities, two First Nations, and two unorganized areas – Nipissing North and Nipissing South. The Board is made up of 11 Municipal councillors and 1 elected representative for the townships without municipal organization. The Board members exercise powers, duties and responsibilities relating to the delivery of human services, while respecting the DSSAB Act and the Board's Procedural By-Laws and governance model. Shared responsibilities with the Province and Municipalities are combined within the DNSSAB.

The strategic planning process is critical to establish and reaffirm the organizational vision, mission, goals, values, and priorities going forward. The 2022-2042 Strategic Plan sets a long-term horizon for achieving the corporate goals while the Board priorities are revisited every four years in step with the municipal election cycle and the Board's governance term. The plan has been updated to reflect the new Board's strategic priorities for the current term, 2023-2026.
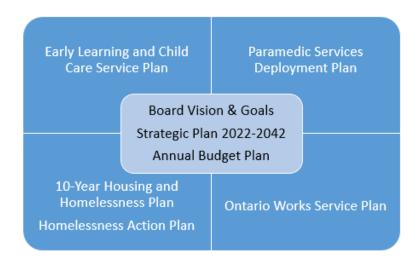
PLAN DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

The original strategic plan was developed during the height of the pandemic and adopted by the Board in January 2022. The plan helped to ground the Board and staff through the remaining stages of the pandemic while providing a new focus on the impact goals well in to the future. The plan is largely internally driven and the development process led to the confirmation of the corporate vision, mission and values, and four over-arching 'stretch' goals. Three of the goals face outwards to clients and the community while the other faces inwards to organizational growth and development. The goals will help successive Boards stay focused on the 'big-picture' outcomes and results that matter over the long run. The Board's priorities for the remainder of the term were also established along with relevant action items, outcomes, and areas of performance measurement.

Following the 2022 municipal elections, the new Board started its four-year term in January 2023 and has established its priorities for the next four years. The priorities were developed through a Board orientation focus group, survey, and interviews, and are set within the existing planning framework. While some of the priorities and action items are similar to the previous Board and align with the previous strategic plan, others are new and have been added to the updated plan.

PLANNING FRAMEWORK AND IMPLEMENTATION

The corporate strategic plan occupies a central role in the organization's planning framework and integrates the Board's vision and goals with other strategic service plans, priorities/ strategies, and the annual budget plan:

As the department operating plans and projects are developed, they are aligned and updated with the corporate plan to work towards achieving the common priorities and goals. This will also ensure there is a strong connection between the functional, service-level strategies, work plans and operational resources, and the corporate vision and longer-term goals.

The senior management team continues to implement the strategic plan with support from staff and department operating units. Implementation activities and details are developed and carried out at the functional, operations level where there is a greater emphasis on tactical details and managing projects and activities, and allocating resources. Additionally, as mentioned above, alignment with department-level service plans and projects will further advance the plan in working towards achieving a common purpose. In terms of achieving the priorities and goals, the plan's progress is measured through various indicators and outcomes, and incorporated into the Business Intelligence system and linked to the performance management system.

THE OPERATING ENVIRONMENT

Along with the rest of the world, the DNSSAB's operating environment was significantly impacted and altered by the global pandemic which affected operations, clients, and community residents in some way. The pandemic also influenced the strategic plan which was developed over the same period. Responding to the pandemic has demonstrated how flexible and adaptive the DNSSAB is in reacting to sudden change and crisis situations, while maintaining core services and operations. The pandemic also amplified the importance of the work the organization does, along with its community partners and other service providers. However, the pandemic also exposed further vulnerabilities of clients and those who are marginalized and/or working in lower-paying jobs. In many cases, the needs of these vulnerable populations went unmet as some community programs and services were forced to close and became unavailable during the pandemic.

As the DNSSAB and communities start to emerge on the other side of the pandemic, the aftermath will continue to have an impact on the Board's operating and service environment. For example, reports and studies point to evidence of the pandemic's lingering affects in areas such as public safety; health; social connection; income; labour markets; employment; and housing. Additionally, the following challenges and opportunities in DNSSAB's operating environment that were previously identified remain relevant at this juncture of updating the plan:

Challenges:

- Recognizing the long-term economic and fiscal realities of the pandemic and the impact this will have on the DNSSAB and local communities.

- Continuing supply chain issues and rising prices, making things even more unaffordable for low-income families and households.

- A persistent job gap where jobs are going unfilled but people are also out of work.

- Changing demographics and the increasing complexity and needs of clients could put further pressure on service levels and delivery.

- Service gaps and a lack of certain community supports negatively affect business operations and client outcomes. Examples include insufficient health supports (e.g. doctors) for clients with mental health issues, social housing units that are unattached to services and supports, and Landlord and Tenant Board backlogs.

- Service and program impacts such as the ageing social housing stock, expiring operating agreements (social housing providers), and childcare centres operating below capacity will increase the waiting lists for these services.

- Potentially negative outcomes and unintended consequences resulting from the provincial transformation of Ontario Works and Employment Ontario.

Opportunities

- Respond to government funding applications and infrastructure investment quickly by having housing development projects in advanced planning stages and shovel-ready.

- Increase public communications to keep residents informed of DNSSAB activities, projects, etc., and advocacy on behalf of the district's vulnerable population.

- Investigate service system navigation for homelessness, mental health, and addictions in more depth to ensure that clients are accessing the services and supports that are available, and by the appropriate service provider.

- Employ new technology and software to update old systems and databases and improve business functions, communications, and service delivery (see point below, also).

- Improve service delivery through methods such as new technology (e.g. providing clients with virtual service options), meeting clients 'where they are at', community outreach, new programming, and alternatives to Paramedic Services transportation for non-urgent patient transfers.

- Formalize service collaboration with community partners in certain sectors to improve client and community outcomes; seek out new partnerships to leverage resources for a specific purpose (e.g. to access funding) or in new sectors to provide alternative or different programming.

- Transition to a hybrid-working model that combines working in the office and remotely.

- Further develop staff through team-building activities; role-transition support; and targeted training and familiarization in specific program areas.

In addition to the above challenges and opportunities in the operating environment, change and transition in two program areas could impact corporate strategy and the Board's direction during the term: social assistance transformation and the direct delivery of land ambulance, which are described below.

Social Assistance Transformation

The provincial government is currently undertaking social assistance reform to improve employment outcomes and accountability. The transformation will include the government taking on more program administration and centralizing service system management for employment, by geographic regions. Additionally, OW and ODSP employment programs will be combined into Employment Ontario. The transformation has started in other regions of Ontario and is expected to have a fundamental impact on the DNSSAB and OW operations starting in 2024.

Nipissing Paramedic Services Direct Delivery

During the 2019 -2022 term, the Board made the decision to switch from contracted land ambulance services to direct delivery and oversight to become more adaptive and responsive to community needs and improve service levels. The transition was completed in 2022 and involved transferring 100+ paramedics into the organization along with the ambulance operations and administrative functions. The transition to direct delivery was a major undertaking and the business impact and effects will be felt over the next couple of years as ambulance operations assimilate and adapt.

VISION & MISSION

VISION

Healthy, Sustainable Communities.

Healthy, sustainable communities where residents have social, economic and environmental conditions and opportunities that enable them to develop to their maximum potential. Residents access the resources they need to maintain or increase their physical, emotional and social well-being and engage fully in life.

MISSION

Support accessible human services in Nipissing District.

The mission reflects the Board's ultimate purpose and reason for being and provides a pathway for achieving the vision.

VALUES

The Board's values represent the core beliefs and principles of Board members and staff. These guide their behavior and decisions and are front and centre in the daily activities and interactions with clients and other stakeholders.

Putting People First
We base our relationships on a foundation of respect, dignity, and fairness. We celebrate diversity, embrace inclusion, and recognize the strengths of others.

Pro-Active
We assume an active role, anticipate future needs, and focus on prevention.

Collaboration
We are committed to working co-operatively to maximize engagement and achieve common goals.

Empowerment
Each of us has the power to influence and make decisions that will positively affect outcomes.

Innovation
We are committed to encouraging confidence, inspiring original ideas, innovative services, and creative solutions.

Inclusion & Diversity
We are committed to providing services and a workplace that is inclusive and diverse.
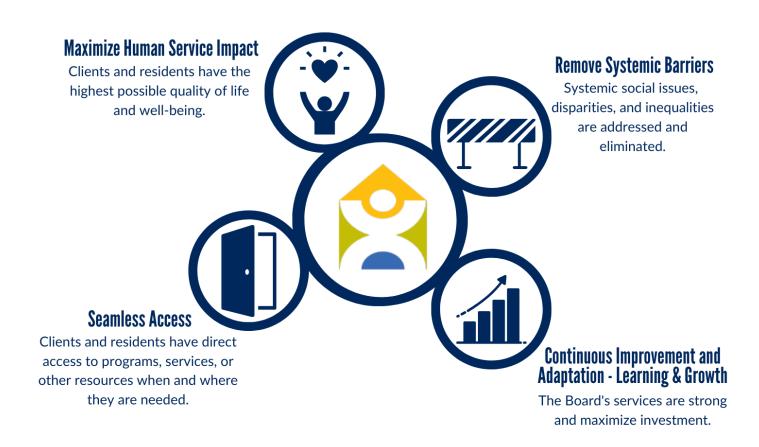
GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The following guiding principles guide the Board and staff in their decision-making and activities. The principles provide a sounding board and test to ensure that policy development, service and program delivery, and projects take the principles in to consideration:

❖ Adopt an anti-oppressive lens and trauma informed care

❖ Build and maintain public trust through community engagement and representing the public interest

❖ Emphasize prevention and take an upstream approach where possible

❖ Empower staff for creating solutions

❖ Follow evidence-based practice and decision making

❖ Focus on what we can control and influence

❖ Measure progress and results to show tangible improvements and goal achievement

20-YEAR GOALS

The Board's goals represent the desired outcomes and core areas of focus to fulfill the vision. The goals transcend multiple Board terms with a timeless focus over the next 20 years and are resilient to changes or shocks to the political, social, and economic systems and operating environments.

Maximize Human Service Impact
Clients and residents have the highest possible quality of life and well-being.

Remove Systemic Barriers
Systemic social issues, disparities, and inequalities are addressed and eliminated.

Seamless Access
Clients and residents have direct access to programs, services, or other resources when and where they are needed.

Continuous Improvement and Adaptation - Learning & Growth
The Board's services are strong and maximize investment.

Maximize Human Service Impact
The Board will leverage its leadership and bring together internal and external stakeholders, in an effort to realize common goals and maximize collective resources for the betterment of people in Nipissing District.

Remove Systemic Barriers
Through a focus on the vulnerable population, the Board will advocate for affordable housing, and support the removal of persisting social barriers such as access to quality child care programs, homelessness, poor mental health, addictions, and poverty, which threaten an individual's well-being and community participation. The related disparities

and inequalities in income, education, socioeconomic status, and health are examples of barriers to individual well-being and healthy communities.

Seamless Access

Enhance service planning, delivery, and access so clients and residents can access programs and services when and where they need them.

Continuous Improvement and Adaptation – Learning and Growth

Taking a continuous improvement approach will lead to processes and operating methods that are efficient and effective, with high-quality service delivery. The complementary focus on internal learning, growth, and adaptability enhances employee and technology capabilities and strengths.

PRIORITIES (2023-2026)

The strategic priorities establish a clear avenue to enable the organization in meeting its goals. While the goals remain fixed over the long-run, the priorities are subject to change with each Board term on a four-year cycle. The priorities below have been set by the current Board for the 2023-2026 term and are a mix of previous priorities being carried over, and new priorities.

The respective priorities also include a set of action items for priority execution. In some cases, the action items are common across the organization and each department will have various sub-actions specific to their program. In other cases, the actions are more department-specific. The intended outcomes for the respective priorities and action items are also presented along with the general areas of performance measurement and an example of qualitative and quantitative indicators.

The strategic plan is implemented by staff with Board updates on progress and results. As a living document, the plan's priorities and action items can change based on changes in the operating and service environment or other influencing factors.

GOAL: Remove Systemic Barriers

Priority: House Those in Need and Facilitate the Development of Affordable Housing as a Built for Zero Community. *Stabilize households by focusing on the upstream social determinants and creating more affordable housing options for those who are vulnerable and in need.*

Action	Outcome	Area of Performance/ Indicator
Stabilize Northern Pines and related homelessness services and coordination across the district.	Northern Pines is financially and operationally sustainable.	• Funding. • Collaboration. • Health engagement.
Explore joint planning initiatives, municipal-owned land, and other opportunities for the construction of affordable housing across the district, with emphasis on rural and outlying areas.	Increased supply of affordable housing.	• Municipal land conversion rate. • Increased # affordable housing units by area.
Explore opportunities to utilize available land through the Nipissing District Housing Corporation to create additional affordable and subsidized housing.	NDHC land assets are maximized to increase the housing supply.	• Land utilization ratio. • Service level standards.
Investigate ways to get some of NDHC's social housing units attached to housing and clinical mental health supports, or designated as supported living.	Social housing tenants receive the supports they require to maintain stability and move towards self-sufficiency.	• Mental health-related incidents/ calls. • Eviction rate.
Identify housing development projects and prepare business cases in advance to respond quickly to funding opportunities, applications, and provincial infrastructure investments.	The affordable and subsidized housing supply is increased to meet the demand.	• Centralized housing waiting list demand. • Application response and success rates.
Implement a Coordinated Access system for homelessness and ancillary services.	To prevent and end homelessness through a streamlined and standardized housing intake and assessment process. Homeless serving agencies are coordinating access and sharing case information and data.	• Percentage of clients housed. • Percentage of clients who remain consecutively housed (e.g. 6+ months). • Number of re-housing occurrences.
Ensure the By-Name List of homeless individuals is tied to a group of community service providers who will find coordinated solutions to rapidly rehouse and provide wrap-around supports to individuals identified.	Homeless individuals are rapidly housed and supported.	• By-name list exits. • Average time an individual is deemed homeless; time-to-housing. • Shelter overflow rate.

GOAL: Continuous Improvement and Adaptation – Learning and Growth

Priority: Strengthen Communications, Understanding and Public Relations. *Engage and inform stakeholders to improve communications, inform public policy, build education and awareness, and strengthen the corporate reputation and image.*

Action	Outcome	Area of Performance/ Indicator
Develop DNSSAB indigenous land acknowledgment statement.	Acknowledgment and recognition of indigenous traditional territory, heritage, and culture.	• Statement is adopted and in use across the organization.
Communicate to the public and other stakeholders, the Board's services.	Public communications and reports on Board service.	• Communication strategy • KPIs and other measures from across the organization.
Increase public communications and relations focusing on what the DNSSAB does (include anti-stigma messaging).	Increased public education and awareness around DNSSAB services.	• Media coverage; reach. • Sentiment analysis. • Website traffic.
Implement strategies to engage early years and child care professionals by creating an online community of practice (i.e., forum, networking, etc.).	Early years and child care professionals are connected and further able to collaborate.	• Engagement rate and levels of early years and child care professionals.
Run a communications campaign to position Nipissing Paramedic Services and paramedics as an integral part of the community.	Increased public education and awareness around Nipissing paramedic services.	• Media coverage; reach. • Brand awareness. • Social media indicators. • Website traffic.

Priority: Become an Employer of Choice. *Build a creative and attractive workplace with strong culture that will attract and retain skilled talent.*

Action	Outcome	Area of Performance/ Indicator
Develop a recruitment, retention, and succession strategy to alleviate unfilled vacancies, increased workloads, and capacity issues.	DNSSAB recruits and retains skilled staff with pathways for succession.	• Staff turnover rate; retention rate. • Length of service. • Average length of time to fill positions.

Action	Outcome	Area of Performance/Indicator
Seek opportunities for staff to participate in career and skill development to further enhance opportunities for the internal filling and succession of positions (see also, Encourage Career Development and Growth).	The organization promotes skill development and growth for career development.	• Certifications and accreditations. • Skill development hours /rate. • Internal/ external hiring ratio.
Ensure that work processes are well documented and accessible to assist with succession planning.	Minimize the loss of knowledge through staff turnover.	• Inventory of workload processes.
Attract, retain and increase the number of Registered Early Childhood Educators and professionals working in the child care sector.	The number of Registered Early Childhood Educators is meeting child care demand.	• ECE turnover rate; retention rate. • Increased operating capacity within licensed child care services.
Investigate the pros and cons of employing NDHC housing maintenance contractors directly versus the current practice of hiring them externally.	NDHC housing maintenance and repair is carried out most effectively and at the best value.	• Costs and benefits of outsourcing vs. insourcing contractors.
Measure DNSSAB's workplace environment and culture to evaluate the current level.	Create a baseline for measuring progress on achieving this priority.	• Mix of quantitative & qualitative data. • InfoHR key indicators. • Staff experience feedback.

Priority: Encourage Organizational Development and Growth.

Implement development and training activities to promote continuous learning and skills development in concert with business needs, for growth and improved performance.

Action	Outcome	Area of Performance/Indicator
Organize training for Board members in areas such as governance, communications, roles & responsibilities, risk management, and general Board development.	Board members have the tools and capacity to provide effective leadership and governance for the organization.	• Number of training sessions

Action	Outcome	Area of Performance/Indicator
Conduct service network training and education: organize joint training and education sessions for relevant service organizations in the service network.	Organizations in the service network receive the same training and education at the same time.	• Number of joint training/education sessions held. • Participation rate. • Training resources leverage.
Investigate developing a type of cross-department familiarization program where participating staff become familiar with other job roles and skill sets, in other departments.	Workforce development, increase in organizational awareness, reduced work silos.	• Operating expenditures that are out-sourced.
Increase team-building activities within and across departments.	Improve corporate culture, communications, cooperation, and collaboration.	• Compare to baseline business metrics after implementation. • Staff feedback (surveys, focus groups).
Ensure that staff have sufficient time allotted to attend training and professional development events and activities.	Continuous learning, career development, and growth.	• Training hours. • Training participation rates.

Priority: Develop Advanced Technology Solutions. *Implement new technology to increase productivity, operating performance and outcome data and measurement, and enhance service delivery.*

Action	*Outcome*	*Area of Performance/ Indicator*
Achieve an organization-wide commitment to technology that includes developing a technology inventory and identifying and prioritizing new technology and/or legacy system upgrades and modernization.	Increased business process efficiency, program metrics, staff productivity, and client experience.	• Budget/ resource amount allocated to technology. • Return on technology. • Digital /technology adoption rate.
Prioritize and implement the following new software and databases and/or upgrade legacy systems: • Tenant Management System • Housing Registry Waitlist System • Social Housing Management System • E-Scribe Agenda Management System	Improved data accessibility, reliability, consistency, security, BI integration, decision support, and reporting.	• Time to market (from concept to launch). • Uptime. • Help Desk requests (pre and post).

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Investigate implementing new technologies to improve client and resident experience: • Provide clients with virtual service options such as live chat functions and virtual connections to health care and other service providers. • Develop a client portal for online applications and document submission, etc. • Provide public computers/ information kiosks at select locations for clients and the general public.	Improve client and resident experiences; enhance service delivery and seamless access to services.	• Client satisfaction rate. • Service channel utilization. • User engagement levels. • Number of unique clients, visitors.
Fully utilize SharePoint or investigate a new document management system.	Documents, information, and data are located in a secure, central location for ease of reference, retrieval, and merging files.	• SharePoint site stats (usage, uploads, downloads, adoption, etc.) • Staff satisfaction.
Secure and protect computer systems and networks from cyber attacks that could result in the breach of information and data.	Corporate and client information and data are secure.	• Number of cyber attacks received and prevented.
Explore opportunities to generate savings through NDHC deep energy retrofits.	A reduction in the total cost of building ownership.	• Building performance. • Energy use minimization.

GOAL: Maximize Human Service Impact

Priority: Strengthen Partnerships, Collaboration, and Opportunities for Internal and External Service Integration. *Implement strategies to combine/ share administrative and/or operational service activities to eliminate duplication and costs, better meet the needs of clients and residents, and improve their service experience and outcomes.*

Action	Outcome	Area of Performance /Indicators
Formalize the sharing of information, service coordination and collaboration, and direct client referrals with select service providers.	Improved client outcomes through interagency collaboration to address service system gaps/ duplication.	• Increased coordination, collaboration, and service sharing to achieve a common goal. • The service gaps and duplications that have been eliminated.
Re-establish and enhance current relationships and/or build new ones to realize common goals and leverage resources and projects for specific priorities or joint planning and service delivery initiatives.	Increased community resources for a common purpose.	• Partnership Relationship Strength Index. • Resource/ project leverage ratio.
Examine ways to increase cross-team and department collaboration to encourage multi-functional teams and reduce internal silos.	Internal silos are reduced, and departments and staff share knowledge, resources, and a common purpose and goals.	• Inter-agency collaboration survey. • Network analysis indicators.
Seek opportunities to integrate Nipissing Paramedic Services with other DNSSAB departments and community home care and supports.	Client and resident needs are identified and addressed through paramedic connection with vulnerable populations and evolving community needs.	• Number of calls resulting in referrals to DNSSAB and community services and programs.

Priority: Enable Client Self-sufficiency and Decrease the Reliance on Social Assistance. *Enable Ontario Works clients to move towards employment, education, income security, and independence and away from social assistance and dependency on the system.*

Action	Outcome	Area of Performance/ Indicator
Stronger OW program alignment with life skills and literacy initiatives; ensure maximum client participation and community integration where possible.	Life stabilization clients without basic skills and education can find employment and financial independence.	• Caseload exits. • Recidivism rates; reasons for return. • Job retention rate.
Implement Ontario Works Social Assistance Transformation Beginning in 2024.	Improved client outcomes. Conduct an organization review relative to the transformation.	• Recidivism • Demographic Caseload • Optimize Resources • Workforce Alignment

Priority: Increase Equitable Access to Quality Early Learning and Child Care. *Remove barriers such as access, affordability, staff availability, and geographic location to ensure all families have equitable access to child care and fee subsidies.*

Action	Outcome	Area of Performance/ Indicator
Assess financial supports available to service providers to ensure affordable and sustainable licensed child care options are available to families across the district.	Quality early learning and child care is affordable for all families.	• Child care affordability measures (e.g. percentage/ share of family income or wage spent on child care).
Implement a strategy to support rural and underserviced communities throughout the district (i.e. EarlyON Mobile Unit, home child care, etc.).	Families living in rural and under-serviced communities have access to quality early learning and child care.	• Increased rural child care participation rate. • Increased population share of children ages 0-12. • Increased access to licensed childcare in underserviced areas.

GOAL: Seamless Access

Priority: Improve Service Access in Nipissing District. *Assess the present service network for DNSSAB clients and residents regarding linkage and equitable access to the services, benefits, and resources they need.*

Action	Outcome	Area of Performance/ Indicator
Undertake a feasibility study to establish a Homelessness Hub that is open during the day, seven days a week, 365 days/yr.	Determine whether the project is operationally and financially viable and would be successful.	• Decision on Hub • Utilization rate • Number of hub visitors rostered into Coordinated Access and the By Name List.
Determine client/resident/ tenant needs through input and feedback from these groups to inform planning and service delivery /access.	The DNSSAB's clients, residents and tenants can access all programs and services to meet their needs.	• Service usage. • Service / program satisfaction score. • Gap analysis.
Identify and explore opportunities for co-location of services as part of establishing wrap-around services for clients.	Clients are receiving all the services and supports they require through a central access point.	• Wraparound model assessment/ program evaluation. • Recidivism rates.
Investigate opportunities to provide outreach services to clients and meet them in their own space/ 'where they are at'; increase opportunity for in-person service access.	Increase contact with clients in their environment and improve the continuum of service delivery and care.	• Outreach penetration rate. • Outreach outcome rate.
Identify and remove any gaps in service delivery, including the reliance on technology which may present a barrier to accessing services.	Individuals and families have equitable access to DNSSAB's programs, supports, and services across Nipissing District.	• Client satisfaction surveys for services offered.

Priority: Increase Service Impact. *Taking an evidence-based and client-centred approach, improve service planning and delivery to meet client needs and expectations.*

Action	Outcome	Area of Performance/ Indicator
Streamline processes to reduce both internal and external administrative burden by automating reporting requirements, increasing efficiency, and maintaining conformance and accountabilities (i.e. database: reporting requirements, funding applications, funding allocations, etc.).	Reporting requirements are streamlined, efficient, and can be easily accessed and completed.	• Process improvement metrics (efficiency, effectiveness, etc.).
Improve data-driven approach and analytics consistency across all departments, to enhance service system planning, program delivery, and improve outcome measurements.	Advanced data collection and analysis in all departments that supports evidence-based decision-making.	• Data consumption/ utilization (data sets, dashboards, etc.). • Decision-makers/ end-user satisfaction with the data and analysis.
Prioritize the policy agenda, and advocate with governments and other bodies to promote and increase awareness of the local, northern and provincial needs concerning housing and homelessness, employment and social assistance, early years and child care, and emergency medical services.	Represent resident's interests, influence policy development, and ensure program sustainability and success.	• Additional funding secured. • Number of advocacy activities. • Successful policy/ program change (legislation, bills passed, etc.).
Establish program sustainability for the Nipissing Community Paramedicine (CP) program across the District.	Nipissing residents and communities receive permanent community paramedicine services and care.	• CP program costs; return. • Number of CP calls; 911 deferrals; home visits; referrals to service providers.