



October 1, 2020

Dear Head of Council:

Under the federal-provincial Safe Restart Agreement, the Ontario government is providing up to \$4 billion in emergency assistance so that municipalities are supported as they respond to COVID-19. Funding for municipalities under the Safe Restart Agreement is being provided through four streams: the Social Services Relief Fund and Municipal Operating Funding that are being implemented by my ministry, as well as funding streams for public health and transit being administered by the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Transportation respectively. On August 12, 2020, I wrote to advise of your municipality's allocation under Phase 1 of the Municipal Operating Funding stream. The ministry is currently in the process of making those payments. Today, I am writing to provide information on applying for additional funding under Phase 2 of the Municipal Operating Funding stream.

Our government recognizes that municipalities play a key role in delivering the services that Ontarians rely on and are at the frontlines of safely reopening our economy. Through Phase 2, we are committed to providing further financial support to those municipalities that require additional funds to address extraordinary operating expenditures and revenue losses arising from COVID-19 in 2020, over and above the allocation provided under Phase 1.

Our government chose to distribute a very significant level of funding to municipalities under Phase 1 – \$695 million in total – because we wanted to ensure all municipalities across our province could continue to deliver the important services their residents and businesses rely on while supporting the safe reopening of our economy. For a majority of municipalities, I anticipate this Phase 1 funding, together with the actions you have taken to find efficiencies and address shortfalls, will be sufficient to manage 2020 financial pressures arising from COVID-19. However, for the group of municipalities that has been hardest hit financially by COVID-19, additional funding may be needed.

Requests for Phase 2 funding are due on October 30, 2020 and detailed information about how to apply is now available to municipalities through the Transfer Payment Ontario (TPON) system.

One of the requirements is a council resolution requesting financial assistance under Phase 2. I want to emphasize that councils are responsible for assessing the financial situation of their municipalities and proceeding with an application under Phase 2 only if further assistance is needed to address COVID-19 pressures in 2020. Municipalities that cannot demonstrate 2020 COVID-19 financial pressures in excess of their Phase 1 funding allocation will not be considered for additional funding under Phase 2.

In addition to a resolution of your municipal council, a reporting template must be completed by the municipal treasurer as part of a municipality's Phase 2 application package. This report is designed to provide an overall picture of the municipality's 2020 financial position and information about service adjustments, use of reserves, and other measures being taken to manage 2020 COVID-19 operating impacts. Our government will allocate Phase 2 funds to only those municipalities that need additional financial assistance. The report also asks for information about your municipality's strategies for finding efficiencies and modernizing services. I look forward to learning about the transformative work that I know is happening across Ontario's municipal sector and your efforts to keep taxes low for families in your communities.

We are not requiring municipalities to submit information about COVID-related costs and revenue losses on a line-by-line basis, and as such the program will not offer a direct line-by-line reimbursement for all COVID-related operating expenditures and revenue losses reported. The federal government has stepped up. Our government is providing an unprecedented level of provincial funding to support municipalities. And we recognize that municipalities also have a critical role to play in finding efficiencies and taking all available measures to address the financial challenges brought by COVID-19 so that they can continue to invest in infrastructure and deliver the services their communities rely on during this extraordinary time.

As noted above, detailed information about how to apply for Phase 2 funding is now available on Transfer Payment Ontario. The ministry will also offer webinars to support treasurers and other municipal officials in understanding Phase 2 application requirements and how to complete the required reporting template. **Please note that the deadline to submit applications is October 30, 2020.** Municipalities may request an extension November 6, 2020, but as noted in my letter of August 12, 2020, we will be unable to consider applications received after this date. I understand this timeline is tight, but it is necessary to allow us to allocate funds to municipalities prior to the end of the municipal fiscal year and meet our commitment to municipalities that need additional help to manage 2020 financial impacts arising from COVID-19. Municipalities who are eligible and approved to receive funding under Phase 2 will be informed before the end of the calendar year and can expect to receive a payment in early 2021.

I will continue to be a strong champion for municipalities as our government charts a path to a safe, strong economic recovery. I extend my thanks to all 444 municipal heads of council for your continued efforts to keep all of our communities across this province safe and to deliver the services your residents and businesses need. Working together, we will get Ontario back on track.

Sincerely,



Steve Clark
Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing

c. Chief Administrative Officers and Treasurers