



Ontario Coalition Against Poverty

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Community Development and Recreation Committee
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June 6, 2017

Dear Committee Members,

I am an Organizer with the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty (OCAP) and a PhD Candidate in the School of Social Work at York University. My position at OCAP is part of my research regarding poverty issues. I also have lived experience with homelessness and have stayed in a shelter.

In addition to my oral deputation, I would like to highlight the following:

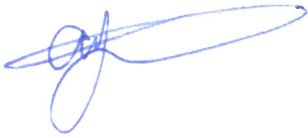
- I. The number of homeless deaths is far higher than previous estimates. Toronto Public Health reported 27 deaths in the first quarter of 2017. This is likely an underestimate.
- II. We need permanent, year-round solutions to the shelter crisis.
- III. Adding more warming centres to the system could be a positive step, but only with the addition of 1,000 more shelter beds. These beds need to be low-barrier beds. This is what we estimate is needed to keep the system at the 90% capacity guideline set by Toronto City Council.
- IV. Increasing the number of warming centres and making Out of the Colds part of the permanent system are a way of lowering the conditions and standards of a large portion of the system.
- V. Lack of adequate shower and washroom facilities, and one large space which raises privacy and

safety concerns have been reasons provided for not opening the armouries – although the concerns about showers and washrooms are only the case if the armouries are mixed gender – are the same for the Out of the Colds and warming centres. Indeed, they are more significant with respect to showers and washrooms because they don't have showers and have fewer washrooms.

- VI. Warming centres have low barriers and are accessed by people who don't access shelter beds because of shelter barriers.
- VII. OCAP demonstrates (see attached report) that Toronto Employment and Social Services took \$10 million of Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative funds, which are provincially funds to be allocated in the year they are provided, and put them in the general reserves rather than address the homelessness crisis in the city. Another \$8 million will be in the Housing Allowance Reserve Fund with no plan to spend it which could be used to address the shelter crisis. In total, \$14 million of these funds were from the Housing Stabilization Fund and were not spent to help homeless people or those at risk of homelessness in the year they allocated. This \$18 million needs to be used, in addition to the current budget, to address Toronto's homeless shelter crisis.

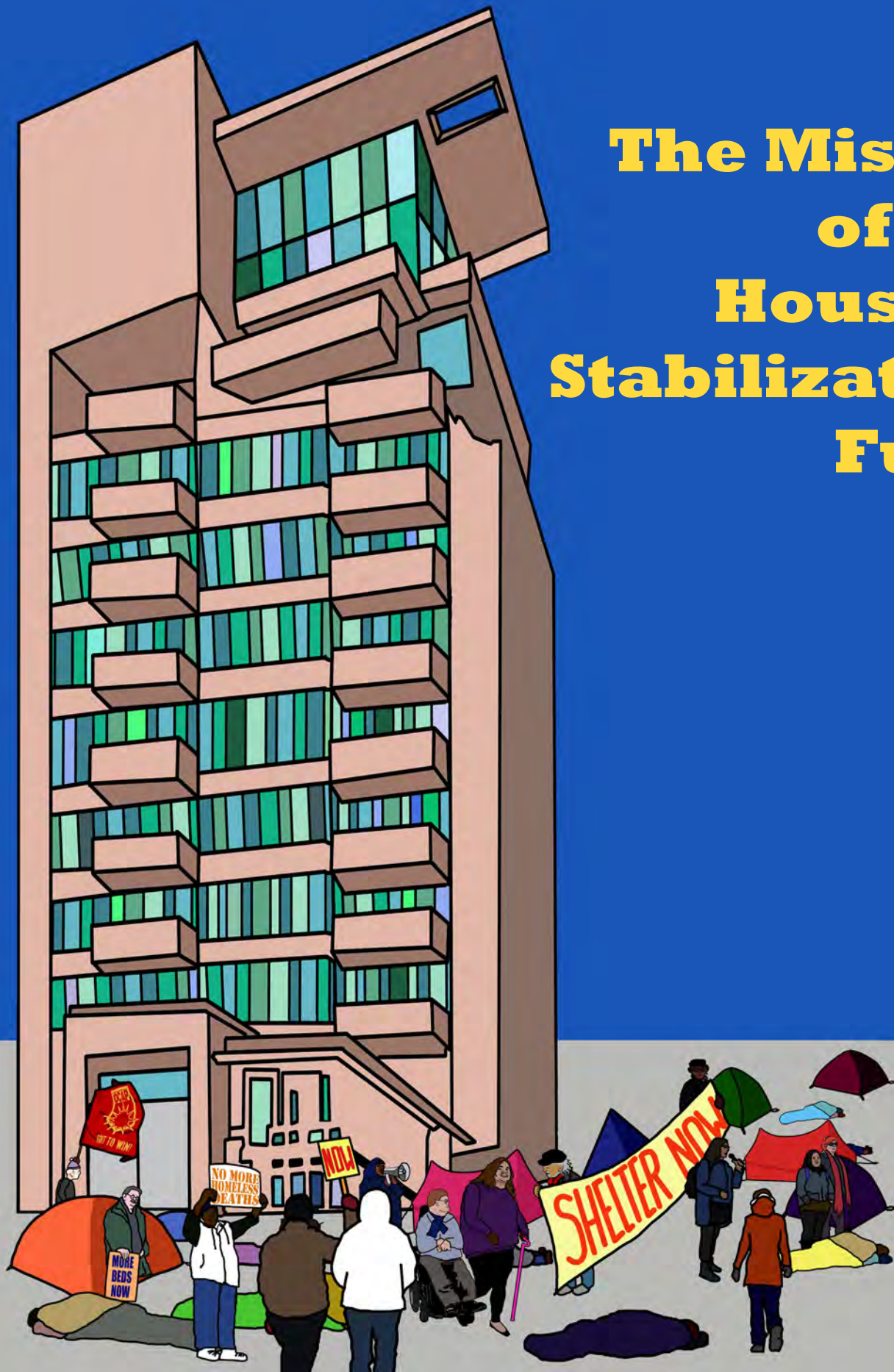
The report, Toronto Robs from the Poor: The Misuse of the Housing Stabilization Fund, which was provided to all members of Toronto City Council on April 26, 2017, is attached.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a stylized, cursive 'S' followed by a horizontal line that curves upwards at the end.

TORONTO ROBS FROM THE POOR

The Misuse of the Housing Stabilization Fund



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List of Acronyms

CDRC - Community Development and Recreation Committee
CHPI - Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative
CSUMB - Community Start-Up and Maintenance Benefit
HSF - Housing Stabilization Fund
OCAP - Ontario Coalition Against Poverty
ODSP - Ontario Disability Support Program
OW - Ontario Works
MoF - Ministry of Finance
SALCO - South Asian Legal Clinic of Ontario
SSHA - Shelter, Support and Housing
TCHC - Toronto Community Housing Corporation
TESS - Toronto Employment and Social Services

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Executive Summary

The Housing Stabilization Fund (HSF) has a mandate to prevent homelessness and was established in 2013 by the City of Toronto using Provincial Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI) funds. The fund is administered by Toronto Employment and Social Services (TESS) and is supposed to help people on social assistance prevent evictions, pay emergency relocation costs and utility arrears and purchase essential furniture.

This report is written in the context of a housing and emergency shelter crisis. The combination of crumbling public housing stock, unaffordable rental market and declining real incomes has led to an escalating crisis of homelessness in Toronto. The city's own reports document a relentless upswing in the numbers of homeless since 2012. The situation has deteriorated considerably faster in the last two years with shelter intakes in 2016 up 13% over the previous year and a

sharp uptick in the numbers of refugees left homeless.

This rise in homelessness has exacerbated an existing crisis of overcrowding and chronic lack of capacity within the shelter system. The dangerous conditions people are forced to live in have resulted in 90 homeless deaths in the past two years; one every 10 days.

HSF Surplus Creation and Distribution

It is during this critical time that the city underspent its HSF budget, creating a surplus of about \$3.5 million each year since the fund's implementation. These surpluses were dealt with in two ways: by depositing them in the city's general reserves and by adding them to a housing allowance reserve.

The HSF surpluses from 2013 (\$3.46 million), 2014 (\$3.47 million) and 2015 (\$3.09 million), totalling \$10 million, were transferred out of homelessness prevention, clumped together with TESS' general surpluses for those years and then distributed in accordance with the City's policy on surplus management. This transfer was in violation of the CHPI funding rules which state that the funds must be spent on or allocated to programs tackling homelessness in the year they are provided. At least 75% of this surplus money went into the city's Capital Financing Reserve Fund with the rest going into other underfunded reserves and liabilities.

The other way the city dealt with the HSF surplus is by depositing it into a Housing Allowance Reserve fund. The reserve was created in 2013 with \$3.7 million dollars of 'unallocated' HSF funds that TESS had access to. It was promised that a housing allowance program would be setup that would give



Inside an Out of the Cold, 2017

260 homeless and at-risk people access to \$400 per month of rent subsidy between 2013 and 2017. Even though the program is now supposed to be in its final year of operation, city officials cannot say what that housing allowance program is called or confirm its operation.

Nevertheless, another \$3.8 million from the projected 2016 HSF surplus was approved to be transferred into this same housing allowance reserve last November. Shelter, Support and Housing Administration (SSHA) similarly transferred surplus from its operating budget to this reserve. By the end of this year, there will be \$8 million in the Housing Allowance Reserve fund with no plan to spend any of it.

Contrary to the position that the City lacks resources to tackle the shelter crisis, it in fact has access to \$18 million dollars sitting in reserves, that could and should instead be spent on providing much needed respite to the homeless.

Reporting Irregularities

There are significant and concerning irregularities in the HSF expenditure and utilization figures reported by the City. These errors occur with great frequency and vary in severity. To cite just two egregious examples, there is a discrepancy in 2014 HSF expenditures of \$1,004,925 between publicly reported data and what was disclosed to us in a *Freedom of Information Act* request, and TESS reported a difference of 8,000 HSF recipients in 2013 between the various reports it issued for that year. Various other instances of misreporting, which range from simple math done incorrectly to serious, at-times inexplicable discrepancies that have substantial impacts, lead us to conclude that there are systemic data collection and management issues within TESS.



Inside a warming centre, 2017.

HSF Redesign

TESS is currently working on redesigning the HSF. This plan involves creating a “flat-rate” granting policy based on averages of past-years issuances. Rather than getting the amount an individual needs, they would get a pre-set amount tied to a specific type of request (i.e. “soft furniture” = \$250). TESS is mining its HSF Tracking Tool for data to create the flat-rate system. However, the Tracking Tool and TESS’ data is demonstrably flawed. Given TESS’ competence in administering the HSF is questionable, its current plans to move ahead with the HSF redesign with no oversight is unacceptable.

Introduction

Purpose of this Report

The Housing Stabilization Fund (HSF) is a necessary benefit that tens of thousands of Torontonians rely upon each year to prevent eviction, flee domestic violence, obtain housing, or get essential household items. It is widely recognized that social assistance rates are too low;¹ without access to the HSF, many people are forced to become or stay homeless, stay in abusive relationships or in other situations where their health and welfare is seriously compromised. The City of Toronto administers the Housing Stabilization Fund, almost entirely with provincial Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI) grant funding. Unfortunately, the City has mismanaged the HSF to the detriment of the poorest people in Toronto.

This report examines this mismanagement, focusing on the misappropriation of the HSF surpluses, the dubious Housing Allowance Reserve fund, and irregularities in the recording and reporting of HSF data. We argue that it is inappropriate for the same City departments that have mismanaged the HSF to redesign the system, particularly without oversight or accountability. Further, we demand that the \$10 million that has been siphoned off the HSF and \$8 million that has been inappropriately budgeted into the Housing Allowance Reserve fund, be immediately directed to alleviate the crisis in the shelter system.

HSF Background

The Housing Stabilization Fund (HSF) is a Toronto benefit that replaced the Provincial Community Start-Up and Maintenance Benefit (CSUMB) in 2013.² The CSUMB was a benefit that anyone on social assistance

could access in Ontario to obtain or retain housing or household items. In Ontario, 192,000 households relied on the CSUMB in 2012.³

Making the biggest cut to social assistance in 20 years, the Provincial Liberal government eliminated the CSUMB in addition to \$10 million in other cuts. The CSUMB cut was a \$110 million austerity measure, which downloaded the responsibility for the benefit onto municipalities; made it optional; and reduced funding by half.⁴ Downloading this responsibility onto municipalities meant that there would be a patchwork of benefits across the province, with some municipalities choosing not to have a CSUMB

replacement at all. It also meant that there would be no right of appeal to the Social Benefits Tribunal; people would have to appeal to the same governments that denied the applications in the first place.

Downloading the CSUMB carried on a long-line of jurisdictional ping-pong. The Province bounces the ball into the City's court, saves money, and says it is no longer its responsibility. Meanwhile, the City says it doesn't have the money to deal with the problem and bounces it back to the Province. We have seen this game with social assistance, housing, transit and many more things that poor and marginalized communities rely on.

The Benefit

Toronto residents on social assistance (OW or ODSP) can get the HSF once a year (every

In 2016, 16,000 different individuals used Toronto's shelter system. The system averaged 4,500 people a night.

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1. e.g.: Polanyi, et al. "The Hidden Epidemic"; Tiessen, Kaylie. "Ontario's Social Assistance Poverty Gap."
 2. TESS, Implementing the HSF.
 3. Income Security Advocacy Centre, Ontario (ISAC) Budget 2012.
 4. Ibid.

2 years for bed bugs) under the following conditions:

1. they are street homeless or in the shelter system;
2. they are moving in the GTA because of domestic violence or to a larger unit because of family size;
3. they are moving to somewhere with lower rent
4. in rent or energy arrears;
5. have had bedbugs and need "soft furniture."

The benefit amount is a maximum of \$1,600 for single people or couples or \$3,000 for families with kids (with up to half for furniture and household items and up to half for moving costs, arrears and/or last month's rent).

The HSF will not replace broken or worn out furniture.¹

The no replacement furniture policy (except soft furniture in the case of bed bugs) means, for example, if someone has a table that breaks, they have to eat on the floor. This is the case even if they have a disability that makes this physically impossible.

There is no mechanism in the policy to accommodate people on the grounds of disability - something that we argue is a gross violation of the *Ontario Human Rights Code*.

The Crisis: Shelters and Housing

Rents are skyrocketing and vacancy rates are in decline.² Almost half of Toronto's tenants spend over 30% of their income on rent. There are roughly twice as many people on wait-list to get into a rent geared to income unit as there are Toronto Community Housing Units (TCHC).³

In addition to the lengthy wait list, the TCHC plans to close nearly 1,000 units this year because it doesn't have a repair budget for them.⁴ The lack of affordable housing in Toronto puts pressure on many Torontonians and forces the poorest into homelessness.

In 2016, 16,000 different individuals

used Toronto's shelter system. The system averaged 4,500 people a night. In fact, shelter use has been on the rise in the city since 2012.⁵ The terrible conditions of the shelter system and the Out of the Colds, the stop-gap measure implemented by the faith community to help the homeless community in the winter months, has been well documented.⁶

The HSF Campaign So Far

OCAP has been part of a network of allies that has fought against the cut to the CUSMB and for better HSF since the Province announced its plans. Across Ontario, we organized to save CUSMB and, while we ultimately lost that battle, we won \$42 million to be put back into the new benefit in 2013. This was a major victory.

Over the next few years, we used direct action case work to help people on social

People were being denied for outrageous reasons, getting less money than they were entitled to, having their applications delayed by TESS for weeks on end until after they moved, and then told they didn't need the money anymore "because they must have found it somehow," and any number of other unfair and unjust encounters with the TESS bureaucracy.

1. TESS, Housing Stabilization Fund (HSF).
2. Bula, "High Rent and Low Vacancy Are Squeezing Renters in Canada's Largest Cities."
3. SSHA, "Quick Facts About Homelessness and Social Housing in Toronto."
4. Torstar News Service, "Lack of Funding..."
5. SSHA, "Proposed New Engagement and Planning Process for Emergency Shelters."
6. Garrett. *Bursting at the Seams*; OCAP, "Out in the Cold."

assistance in Toronto to get the HSF when they needed it. Direct action casework means that, instead of going through legal appeals processes, we use protest tactics. We go down to the office and disrupt it until we get a meeting and, ultimately get what the person is entitled to.

We also ran a few HSF clinics where we signed up as many people as we could to get the HSF. With the new system, people didn't know how to access the HSF. So, we walked people through the process and we backed them up if they were denied. Based on what we heard from people we were talking to, we knew that a lot of people were having a hard time getting the HSF. People were being denied for outrageous reasons; they were getting less money than they were entitled to; they were having their applications delayed by TESS for weeks on end until after they moved and only to be told they didn't need the money anymore "because they must have found it somehow." There were any number of other unfair and unjust encounters with the TESS bureaucracy.

When a woman named Laura Bardeau came to OCAP with her HSF case, we fought it like any other. At that time, the City applied a secret formula to HSF applications that was so secret that even the HSF workers weren't allowed to know what it was. That formula said that Laura, a single mom on ODSP with two disabled kids, had "excess income" so she didn't qualify for the HSF.

We went to the OW office but had no luck. In addition to direct action, we also felt it necessary to file the normal legal paperwork. We wanted to get a better picture of what was going on. We kept pushing. We called on people to call the City Councillor in charge

of TESS and the Mayor to tell them to give Laura the HSF. We went to City Hall with a delegation of people. There, we met with TESS officials who promised to give us the secret policy and look into Laura's case. While at City Hall, we filed a *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* request just

in case. Eventually, we won the HSF for Laura and her kids.

But once we got the policy, our suspicions were confirmed: the City was counting the Child Tax Benefit, Special Diet Benefit and Guide Dog Benefit - benefits you get only because you have kids or disabilities - as "excess income." TESS systematically reduced the amounts that people received by counting those benefits against them. Often

people were entirely disentitled to the HSF because they had children or got benefits because they were disabled.

So, in October 2016, OCAP and the South Asian Legal Clinic of Ontario (SALCO) wrote "Left in the Lurch: The Destabilizing Reality of Toronto's Housing Stabilization Fund"¹ documenting the discriminatory practices of TESS in administering the HSF. We exposed the discrimination as well as TESS' unfair and opaque decision making processes.

We also found a number of discrepancies in the publicly issued reports and suspected financial mismanagement. This was something that we couldn't prove, however... *until now.*



1. OCAP and SALCO, "Left in the Lurch."

HSF Surpluses: Where Has the Money Gone?

Since the Housing Stabilization Fund was implemented in 2013, it has had a surplus each year. Averaging nearly \$3.5 million annually for a total of \$14 million (see Table 1.1), these funds were withheld from people who desperately needed them.

A total of \$10 million in surpluses seemed to just vanish.

As we have shown in our Left in the Lurch report, these surpluses were generated through unfair practices. These included violating the principles of natural justice and administrative fairness and discriminating against disabled people and parents which systematically lowered or extinguished entitlements.

This money has gone down two separate tracks that OCAP has spent months trying to trace. Some of this surplus money is simply unaccounted for, meaning that those funds those are no longer designated for homelessness prevention - as they were

2013 money. However, the surpluses listed in Table 1.1, totalling \$10 million, seemed to just vanish.

The Province's rules stipulate that the money has to go towards one of four areas:

1. Emergency Shelter Solutions
2. Housing With Related Supports
3. Other Services and Supports
4. Homelessness Prevention³

Except for the HSF, all of the CHPI money is dealt with by another City department (Shelter, Support and Housing Administration). That includes money for shelters, warming centres, housing allowances, etc. If the HSF surplus was going to be spent in one of the CHPI mandated areas, it would have to be transferred outside of TESS. For this to happen, there would have to be City Council approval - and a record of such an approval. No record exists for 2014, 2015 and half of the unspent amount from 2013.

Tellingly, the HSF surplus made up 37% of the 2013 TESS surplus.

Table 1.1: HSF Surpluses (in \$ millions)¹

Year	Budget	Spent	Surplus
2013	28.53	25.06	3.46
2014	27.96	24.49	3.47
2015	27.96	24.87	3.09
2016	27.96	24.16	3.80
Total	112.40	98.58	13.82
Average	28.10	24.65	3.45

intended by the Province. A portion of the surplus has been reallocated into a Housing Allowance Reserve fund.

Before we follow the money, we first need to explain the 2013 surplus further. Table 1.1 shows a HSF budget of \$28.5 million for 2013 with an unspent surplus of \$3.5 million. However, the City had an additional \$3.7 million in unallocated HSF funding that year, so the HSF budget could have actually been \$32.23.² So, while there was a \$3.5 million surplus, there was \$7.2 million in unspent money that year.

Part I: Surpluses

Some of the HSF surplus money has been dealt with openly. This was the case in 2016 money and for the \$3.7 million unallocated

After months of digging, we finally got TESS to tell us that the 2014 and 2015 surpluses were "distributed in accordance with the Surplus Management policy."⁴ The City's surplus management policy states that budget surpluses will be reallocated to reserve funds. At least 75% of the surpluses will be moved into the Capital Financing Reserve Fund and the rest will go into "any underfunded liabilities, and/or reserves/ reserve funds, as determined by the Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer."⁵ The 2013

1. See Appendix E.

2. TESS, 2013 Year-End Report on HSF, p. 5.

3. Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. "CHPI: Program Guidelines."

4. Email correspondence with Anna Fiorino, Apr 13, 2017, See Appendix I.

5. Chief Financial Officer & Treasurer. "Policy on Management of Operating Budget Surpluses."

Table 1.2: Planned Housing Allowance Distribution⁷

2014	2015	2016	2,017	Total
870,000	1,169,300	1,102,200	533,700	3,675,200

Operating Variance Report to the Budget Committee, unlike the 2014 and 2105 reports names the HSF as part of its surplus.¹ Consequently, the HSF surplus for all of those years, we learned was distributed according to City policy (and, therefore, contrary to Provincial policy).

In 2013 TESS had an overall surplus of \$19.6 million. Tellingly, the HSF surplus made up 18% of the entire TESS surplus.²

In short, while the City short changed people on social assistance applying for the HSF and said it had no money to improve conditions in shelters, it took the money it had for those things and put it in the bank.

Part II: Housing Allowance

In 2013, TESS reported that it would have an estimated \$3.7 million unspent in HSF money and recommended establishing a housing allowance.³ Provincial rules stipulate that CHPI funds must be spent in the fiscal year.⁴ Rather than loosen the policy so that more people could get the money, and instead of moving the funds over to the shelters, the City squirrelled it away.

The creation of the reserve fund was approved in October, 2013. The housing allowances, which come out of the reserve fund via the Ministry of Finance, are \$400 per month for up to 260 households. In order to qualify for the allowance, one must be an at-risk senior, an aging shelter user or a street homeless person with "history of repetitive street involvement and with multiple/concurrent service barriers."⁵

It wasn't until March of 2014, however, that the City took steps to make an agreement with the Province so it could actually distribute the allowances.⁶

In creating the program, City Council set out a 3 year plan for the reserve fund to be fully distributed by the end of 2017 (see Table 1.2). In the first year, 2014, \$0.87 million was moved out of the reserve fund.

Table 1.3 shows that towards the end of

Table 1.3: Housing Allowance Reserve Expenditures⁸

Year	Month	Year Opening Balance	Transfers (To) From Operating	Closing Balance
2013	Dec	0	3,700,000	3,700,000
2014	May	3,700,000	0	3,700,000
2014	Dec	3,700,000	(870,000)	2,830,000
2015	June	2,830,000	0	2,830,000
2015	Sept	2,830,000	1,072,000	3,902,000
2015	Dec	2,830,000	(97,300)	2,732,700
2016	June	2,732,700	0	2,732,700
2016	Sept	2,732,700	0	2,732,700

\$1.17 million vanishes from the budget in 2015. This is the difference between what was scheduled to be withdrawn and what was deposited by SSHA. This is not acceptable accounting practice.

1. Policy on Management of Operating Budget Surpluses s. (3).
2. Ibid., p. 6.
3. Report B: TESS. "Housing Stabilization Fund: Updates and New Housing Allowance."
4. Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, "CHPI Program Guidelines."
5. See note 2, p. 10
6. Budget Committee. "Toronto Housing Allowance 2014 Budget Adjustment."
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. Most recent reserve fund reports not yet available. Treasurer, City of Toronto. "Reserves and Reserve Funds" 2014 - 2016 (see references for list).

2015, \$1.072 million was added from Shelter, Support and Housing Administration budget funds to the Housing Allowance Reserve fund.¹ It is unclear why more than \$1 million was put in this reserve without any plan to spend it. That was money that could have been used to alleviate some of the misery in the shelter system.

In December, 2016, faced with another significant HSF surplus, City Council chose to transfer the funds into the Housing Allowance Reserve Fund.² At this time, OCAP and our allies had forced the City to change its discriminatory HSF policy. However, rather than reviewing these unjust denials or transferring the money into the shelter system, the City dumped the surplus into the inactive Housing Allowance Reserve.³

At that same time, Shelter, Support and Housing Administration was penning the budget for the next year and planning to further cut the already overstretched shelter system. Inexplicably, they proposed a \$2.7 million contribution to the Housing Allowance Reserve.³

While the City was allocating millions of dollars to the Housing Allowance Reserve Fund, it wasn't keeping track of what was going out or planning what to do with the money beyond the 2013 funds.

The Ministry of Finance also administers the City's other housing allowances. While these particular housing allowances are for specific groups of people at risk of or leaving homelessness, the other housing allowances aren't. The annual income cut-off for other City housing allowances is \$37,000 for a single person or \$50,000 for a family of 3.⁴ This is a far cry from welfare rates. If the housing allowances that are supposed to be used to prevent homelessness got mixed in with the other City housing allowances, it is unlikely the City would be preventing

homelessness.

While TESS and SSHA are supposed to be referring people to the housing allowance, a SSHA Program Director and TESS' Manager, Strategic Issues, Policy and Research can't even tell us what the name of the housing allowance is. SSHA has no reports from the Ministry of Finance about who has received the allowance, how many allowances have been issued.⁵

As one homeless person dies every ten

days in Toronto,⁶ why are millions of dollars designated to meet people's urgent housing needs sitting in a reserve fund? How is it that in the midst of a crisis the 2013 and 2016 funds that were transferred from the HSF were considered surplus in the first place? How is it that Shelter, Support and Housing Administration

can't meet basic standards in the shelter system but can allocate millions to an elusive reserve fund which it hasn't bothered to keep track of?

In short, while the City short changed people on social assistance applying for the HSF and said it had no money to improve conditions in shelters, it took the money it had for those things and put it in the bank.

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1. SSHA. "SSHA: 2016 Operating Budget Overview." TESS. "Update on the Delivery of the HSF."
 2. TESS, Report For Action: Update on the Delivery of the HSF.
 3. Ibid.
 4. SSHA, "SSHA: 2017 Operating Budget Overview."
 5. SSHA, "Housing Allowances FAQ."
 6. Communication with Glen Morgan, SSHA Director, March 1, 2017.
 7. Social Planning Toronto et al., "Over 30 Agencies Call upon Mayor Tory..."

HSF Reporting Irregularities in Brief

Each application is not simply a file on a computer somewhere; it is attached to a person or a family. The HSF data makes it easy to forget the very real human stakes attached to every single HSF application.

HSF reporting is important because of the high stakes for the people involved. It is difficult for people like multi-millionaire Mayor John Tory or Patricia Walcott, who makes over \$210,000 a year¹ - or roughly 25 times what someone on welfare makes² - to understand how essential a few hundred dollars for furniture may be. This may

partially explain why Toronto Employment and Social Services has misreported and miscalculated the HSF data so frequently. Indeed, as we will show, the only consistency in HSF reporting has been its inconsistencies.

However, this data is the only way that the public, including poor people's organizations like ours, can know how many people are getting HSF and how much money they are getting other than through anecdotal evidence. There are significant and

Sills Required to Compile HSF Reports:

1. Counting
2. Adding
3. Averaging

or

Using a spreadsheet program

Report Referencing

A number of City reports are referred to repeatedly throughout this section and the section that examines the irregularities in detail. For simplicity's sake, each report has been given a letter, listed below. Where data tables are relied upon, these are reprinted in this report with appendices with the same letter.

Report A: Implementing the HSF: Update on the Progress to Date, April 2013

Report B: Housing Stabilization fund: Updates and New Housing Allowance, Sept., 2013

Report C: 2013 Year-End Report on HSF. April, 2013

Report D: 2014 Update on the Delivery of the HSF, March, 2015

Report E: Report For Action: Update on the Delivery of the HSF. Nov., 2016

Report F: FOI Appeal response letter and attached documents, City of Toronto. Jan. 2017.

Report G: Toronto Budget 2017

Report H: FOI response, City of Toronto, March 2017.

Report A only has data for Jan.-Mar and B for Jan.-June 2013. Their numbers are identical for the first 3 months of 2013.

HSF data has never been fully publicly reported for the years 2014, 2015 or 2016.

inexplicable irregularities in HSF reporting by Toronto Employment and Social Services. In this section, we will outline some of the most serious examples of reporting irregularities (all irregularities, including these are listed in detail in Part 2: Detailed Examination of Discrepancies in HSF Reporting). Multiple reports about the same time period provide very different numbers of recipients of the HSF but, almost magically, in all but one instance, the year-end dollar figures add up to be the same.

Here are a few examples:

There is a difference of \$1,004,925 between the publicly reported HSF expenditures in

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1. Province of Ontario, "Public Sector Salary Disclosure 2016."
 2. City of Toronto, "Ontario Works (OW) Rate Chart."

2014 (Appendix E) and what was reported to OCAP through our *Freedom of Information Act* request (Appendix F). The FOI appears to be a printout from the HSF Tracking Tool (unlike some of the obviously incorrect FOI information provided elsewhere), making this discrepancy concerning.

In 2013, TESS reports a significantly different number of recipients: 37,778 (Appendix C) and 29,456 (Appendix D). This is a difference of 8,332 benefit units, or 22%. This has significant implications for the appearance of the success of the program. It also dramatically impacts the average issuance of the benefit: \$853 or \$606.

One set of numbers provided by the city for 2015 states \$24.3 million was spent on HSF, excluding December (Appendix F). Another set, which includes December, indicates a total yearly expenditure of \$24.9 million (Appendix E). This implies that \$0.6 million was spent on the HSF in December 2015. In Comparison, this is more than \$1.4 million less than what was spent in December in the years 2013 and 2014. It seems more likely there are other issues with the records than that December 2015 expenditures were so low.

Each report has been signed off on by City Management. Patricia Walcott is the General Manager of Toronto Employment and Social Services and approved Reports C, D and E. She is also listed as the contact person for Report B, along with Phillip Abrahams, General Manager of Shelter, Support and Housing Administration.

This data isn't benign: it is used to legitimize changes to the HSF. Recently, when OCAP said people weren't getting enough money, TESS gave a journalist the data that contained the higher average issuance. But, when we argue that not enough people get the benefit, we are given the data that has the higher number of people receiving the benefit.

There is a \$1 million discrepancy for 2014.

When someone on welfare misreports their income to TESS by a few hundred dollars, the City could investigate them for fraud and they could be charged with a criminal offense.

When TESS misplaces a million dollars, the City doesn't seem to notice.

HSF Redesign

As part of the victory removing discrimination from the HSF, TESS announced an overhaul of how the HSF would be distributed. There are three key and interrelated changes to this system: introduction of a flat rate, and changes to bed bug policies.

Some of these changes could be positive, although are not good enough, while others are negative, even potentially devastating to social assistance recipients in Toronto.

We already know, however, that whatever changes that will be implemented for the HSF are designed to ensure that those receiving the HSF get far below their entitlement. The TESS 2017 Operating Budget (Appendix G) indicates that they are aiming to issue 3,600 payments a month in 2017.¹ With a budget of \$28 million, That would allow them to pay out an average of \$648 per eligible application. If 2017 continues the trend of having a surplus (averaging \$3.5 million) it would lead to an average of around \$567 per payment. The maximum payment is \$1,600 for singles and couples or \$3,000 for families with kids.

Therefore, we already know that TESS is building systematic low-balling of poor people into the new plan. Here are the key changes:

Flat Rate

The most dramatic of the announced changes will be a switch to a flat rate system. Currently HSF is assessed based on proven need. For example, individuals provide a list of furniture that they need along with estimates of costs of the furniture and the HSF is released for them to purchase the items. A flat rate system will issue a predetermined amount for a needed item. Someone would get, say, \$15 for a lamp or \$300 for a couch or \$200 for moving a bachelor apartment.²

Because the system is based on averages,

lots of people will get less than they would need. TESS Director, Phil Eisler said: "it's going to be more consistent with respect to its application and issuance but certainly it's going to... for some, be a disadvantage and, for some, be an advantage."³ For people

Table 2.1: GTA Retailer Estimates for Basic Furniture, includes Taxes & Delivery⁵

Retailer	Single-Bed	Double-Bed	Total
IKEA	\$381	\$562	\$943
The Brick	\$472	\$549	\$1,021
Leon's	\$417	\$563	\$980
Sears	\$514	\$749	\$1,263
Walmart	\$315	\$575	\$890
Average	\$420	\$600	\$1,019

on OW and ODSP, "a disadvantage" is an impressive euphemism for forcing someone to have to choose between going hungry and sleeping on the floor.

Eisler uses moving as an example where some people will be disadvantaged over others because of the many different ways people can move. Currently, people have to get moving estimates which are difficult to get in writing. This is especially the case

when people have a short window to move because of eviction, domestic violence, flood or fire. This is an instance where a flat rate could be very useful. However, there needs

"A disadvantage" is an impressive euphemism for forcing someone to have to choose between going hungry and sleeping on the floor.

1. City of Toronto, "Toronto Employment and Social Services: 2017 Operating Budget Overview."
2. These are example numbers, not numbers TESS has provided.
3. Conversation with Phil Eisler, February 17, 2017.
4. Toronto City Council, Community Development and Recreation Committee - November 29, 2016.
5. Retailers were phoned the week of November 28, 2016.

to be a mechanism for people with atypical circumstances, including having to move items from multiple sites, people who need to get help packing because of health or disability issues, etc., to get additional funds quickly.

There is a flat rate system for beds if someone has bedbugs. TESS General Manager, Patricia Walcott acknowledged in November 2016 that the amount for beds is insufficient and that “we need to set new amounts.”⁴ However the amount for beds is still capped at \$300 for a twin and \$500 for a double. In a review of market prices that OCAP did in November 2016, we found that there were no major stores that offered beds at that price. The average cost of a bed was at least \$100 more than what TESS paid (see Table 2.1).

At a minimum, a flat rate would have to be set at realistic rates, indexed to inflation and include mechanisms in the policy for people who require disability accommodations (e.g. adjustable beds) or flexibility due to their personal circumstances to get additional money.

Bed Bugs and Soft Furniture

An important victory from OCAP’s HSF campaign is that the replacement of “soft furniture,” in addition to beds, can now be paid for through the HSF. This amount is up to \$250 for a single person or couple or \$300 for a family. However, soft furniture is undefined anywhere in the policy. So, a wooden table would not qualify under the policy but a blow-up table may well qualify.

Money for mattress encasements is also available now. This includes \$45 for a twin bed and/or \$60 for a double or queen bed.¹

Reduced documentation

TESS also stated that it would reduce the documentation required of HSF applicants. Few of these policies have yet to be changed,

however. As of April, it now indicates that “Verification of pest control treatment will be required.”² But, it gives no indication what that means. Previously, two treatments followed by written verification from the landlord was required (landlords may be, unsurprisingly, reluctant to document bedbug infestations in writing). This may be a small but important victory - or it could be another confusing policy that is applied unevenly.

It increasingly seems to be the case that the reduced documentation is largely attached to the flat rate structure. General Manager of TESS, Patricia Walcott, indicated to the CDRC that the flat rate system would cut back on required documentation.

New Design, Same Old Story

The HSF redesign will continue to ensure that many of the poorest people in Toronto cannot access the funds they desperately need to find housing, keep housing and/or obtain necessary furniture.

Given what we have demonstrated throughout this report, we think it is important to ask if TESS is competent to redesign the HSF, especially without any meaningful oversight. They plan to consult stakeholders but not even return to City Council for a rubber stamp.

TESS General Manager, Patricia Walcott told the CDRC that the flat rate would be based on a review of the market.⁴

However, TESS Director Phil Eisler told



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1. Toronto City Council, Community Development and Recreation Committee - November 29, 2016.
 2. TESS. Report For Action: Update on the Delivery of the HSF
 3. We do not want to imply that City Council is properly reviewing TESS with respect to the HSF. From everything we have seen, Council and the CDRC largely differ to TESS and have failed to push TESS to implement fair or transparent HSF policies and procedures.
 4. See note 1.

us that a review of the HSF Tracking Tool database was taking place to establish the flat rates. After that, they will share what they find in consultations with stakeholders. Obviously, we have significant concerns with anything derived from the HSF Tracking Tool. In fact, at this point, we have serious concerns with anything that involves TESS staff doing simple math (see: Detailed Examination of Discrepancies in HSF Reporting).

While TESS has decided, according to Phil Eisler that they are going to take a consultation approach to the HSF redesign rather than go “through a political mechanism,”¹

OCAP rejects this approach. We reject another behind closed doors redesign given the many previous botched HSF policy measures and implementation approaches. We also reject it on the grounds that the fact that the average issuance has already been predetermined and is too low.

Over the years, OCAP has worked with many people on social assistance who were threatened with having to take budgeting classes because they were in arrears of rent. This always made us especially furious because the problem was never that people couldn't keep track of money, it is that people didn't have enough of it.

Having done this research, however, we are hit with a new sense of irony. Clearly it is TESS who can neither keep track of money nor can they do simple math.



Inside a warming centre, 2017.

Detailed Examination of Discrepancies in HSF Reporting

We have briefly summarized some of the issues with the reporting of the HSF data and raised concerns about the both the data and the people who are administering the HSF. In this section, we will provide a much more thorough analysis of the HSF reports based on the information we have compiled over the past 8 months. While we clearly do not have a full or complete picture of what has gone on with the HSF, we have tried working through official channels and been unsuccessful. It is our hope that by exposing the information that we do have about the HSF that we can pressure TESS to fully and fairly distribute the fund to poor people in Toronto.

2013: Rocky Start

There are dramatically different reports for this year. Reports A,B,C,D and E are all the publicly available reports that contain some data for 2013. Report A only has data for the first 3 months of the program and Report B is identical, with data for another 3 months. We also have data from our FOI request. Other than the matching Report A and B, all of the other data is different.¹

There is a difference of over 8,000 total applications and total eligible applications (i.e. people who actually received the HSF) in 2013 (see Table 3.1). Multiple reports provided to the Community Recreation and Development Committee of City Council that oversees Toronto Employment and Social Services reported dramatically different numbers of applicants, amounting to a

Table 3.1: 2013 Application Discrepancies³

	Number of Applications			Number of Eligible Applications		
	Report B	Report C	Report D	Report B	Report C	Report D
January	1,496	1,711	1,653	1,051	1,211	1,168
February	1,489	1,673	1,661	1,133	1,251	1,234
March	1,665	1,951	1,704	1,336	1,525	1,276
April	3,010	3,825	3,006	2,646	3,399	2,583
May	4,080	5,114	4,036	3,889	4,710	3,611
June	3,384	4,337	3,349	3,293	3,983	2,989
July		4,702	3,677		4,285	3,252
August		4,259	3,292		3,892	2,917
September		3,840	2,989		3,503	2,643
October		4,221	3,329		3,875	2,971
November		3,769	3,022		3,371	2,613
December		3,152	2,605		2,773	2,199
Total		42,554	34,323		37,778	29,456

Table 3.2: 2013 Financial Discrepancies⁴

	Total Amount Issued		Average Issuance			
	Report B	Report C,D,F	Report B	Report C	Report D	Report F
January	\$454,000	\$440,791	\$432	\$407	\$377	\$407
February	\$571,535	\$655,987	\$504	\$460	\$532	\$460
March	\$711,082	\$814,159	\$532	\$468	\$638	\$468
April	\$1,582,639	\$1,851,900	\$598	\$558	\$717	\$558
May	\$2,602,404	\$3,058,934	\$669	\$640	\$847	\$640
June	\$2,252,943	\$2,747,836	\$684	\$650	\$919	\$650
July				\$646	\$915	\$646
August				\$631	\$935	\$631
September				\$641	\$960	\$641
October				\$617	\$943	\$617
November				\$613	\$912	\$613
December				\$605	\$942	\$605
Total	\$8,174,603	\$9,569,607	\$684	\$606	\$851	\$606

variance of 22%.

There were also substantial financial irregularities for the first 6 months of 2013, with one report indicating that \$1.4 million less was spent than other reports indicated

1. See Reports A through F.

3. Discrepancy with Report B which only provides data until June, 2013. See Reports and Appendices B, C, D, F.

4. Ibid. Reports C,D and F have data for the rest of the year but only the first 6 months are displayed in order to highlight the difference in the amounts with Report B.

(see Table 3.2). Report B, which had dramatically different HSF expenditures only provided data up to June so it did not provide a year end total which, presumably, would have also been substantially different from other reports.

Even those reports that provide the same expenditure data, however, provide different average HSF issuances because the eligible application numbers are all different.

There are also different numbers provided in 2013 for the "reasons for requests." Some money was issued through the HSF in this year for people to prep their units for bed bug treatment.¹ It is unclear why only one report contains these numbers.

While there are a number of issues with the 2013 data, Report C - the first full year's worth of data ever issued with respect to the HSF - has significant errors throughout. The calculation of the average issuance per recipient per month and total average, unlike all other reports, cannot be calculated with the numbers provided in the report. The average provided do not appear to have a logical mathematical relationship to the number of eligible applications, amount of funds issued,

Table 3.4: HSF Funding 2013-2014 (\$Millions)²

	2013	2014
CHPI Funding	23.900	23.900
One-Time Provincial Funding	6.800	2.532
Property taxes	1.525	1.525
Sub-total	32.225	27.957
Total	31.525	27.957

Notice the difference of \$0.7 million between the total and subtotal for no reason whatsoever.

number of applications or any other relevant data. The "total average calculation per recipient based on the numbers provided with

Table 3.3: 2013 Discrepancies in Reasons for HSF³

	Report C	Report D	Report F
Last Month's Rent	11934	11164	11934
Furniture	19725	19418	19725
Rental Arrears	4570	3996	4570
Energy Arrears	1446	1498	1446
Moving/Storage	3631	4976	3631
Unit Prep/Shelter Support	234	-	-
Total	41540	41052	41306

this data is \$663. The average of \$606 can only be calculated if the total expenditure is divided by 41,326, the number of payments listed on page 7 of the FOI for 2013. This number, however, surpasses the number of eligible applications reported for that year in all of the publicly available data. Further, the total reasons per month and annual total do not make mathematical or logical sense. There are fewer reasons for issuance of the HSF than there are eligible applications for the months of January and April in 2013. The must at least one reason for an application to be considered eligible.

Additionally, the FOI Appeal (Appendix F) lists Shelter Fund Enhancement payments of \$53,596 for July and \$13,000 for May. This line is not provided in any other HSF reports for any other years. How many people received these funds and why it is not indicated in any other reports is unknown.

In a March, 2017 response to a follow-up FOI requesting documents related to all of the 2013 discrepancies in expenditures and utilization, the City only addressed the total expenditures, stating that the \$25.1 million figure was correct.⁴ It also asserted that "the Number of Payments which totaled \$41,326 (sic)... reflects actual payments (e.g. cheques) issued."⁵ They did not address any of the other concerns with expenditures and

1. See Reports A through F.

2. Table copied from Report C, page 5.

3. Discrepancy with Report B which only provides data until June, 2013. See Reports and Appendices B, C, D, F.

4. See Appendix H.

5. Ibid., p. 1.

utilization or provide any internal records relating to those discrepancies.

Their response also acknowledges that “Concerns with the reliability of the data in the HSF Tracking Tool, which does not include HSF Expenditures or Payments, have been reported in various Staff Reports. The database was developed and implemented quickly to meet the implementation date of Jan. 5th 2013. Therefore, variances in some data have been detected. Initially, data collection from the HSF Tracking Tool did not allow for a distinction in the data between the OW and ODSP programs.”¹ This response raises two further questions in addition to those that went unaddressed:

1. how can the dramatic expenditure differences between reports be explained?
2. if the tracking tool could not differentiate between OW and ODSP, how were the data collected for Report E which indicate the precise number of OW and ODSP cases for 2013?

2014: What’s a Million Dollars Here or There?

Significant errors continued into 2014. In addition, because the Government of Ontario implemented the Social Assistance Management System (SAMS) computer software, the City’s reports contained numbers of applications but not funds issued for November and December. Indeed, the total funds and average funds issued for these months have never been publicly reported (although they have been provided to us through our *Freedom of Information Act and Protection of Privacy Act* appeal, see Appendix F).

The most alarming discrepancy for this year is a difference of \$1,004,925 between the publicly reported HSF expenditures in 2014 (Appendix E, which are also found on page 3 of the FOI, at Appendix F) and what was reported to OCAP through our *Freedom of Information Act* request (Appendix F). This is a very significant discrepancy for which we have found no explanation. The higher of the two totals seems somewhat more plausible as it is supported with other data. However, an

examination of page 7 of Appendix F shows that the November and December columns are greyed in. There is no explanation given for this. This may indicate that the figures in these two columns are estimates because of issues data collection. We recognize that the SAMS software caused substantial difficulties in the computer systems for social assistance administrations in Ontario.

It would also seem that TESS is incapable of even the most rudimentary math. When we added the total number of OW and ODSP eligible and ineligible applications, it did not equal the total number of applications: the difference was 2,444 applications (See Appendix F, p. 3).

2015: No Better

Reporting discrepancies for 2015 are difficult to trace because only partial data for that year has ever been publicly reported. Inexplicably, the month of December, 2015 is not reported even in our FOI although the information was requested several times.

The FOI (Appendix F, p. 8) reports the total 2015 expenditures as \$24,288,957. It does not provide totals for December of that year, simply leaves the month blank. Report E indicates the HSF expenditure for 2015 was \$24,872,679. This indicates that, if the data in the FOI is correct, \$583,722 was spent on the HSF in December, 2015. This is less than was spent in the 2nd or 3rd month that the program was in operation (depending on which set of numbers are correct). Our calculation of the average monthly expenditure, as calculated by year, is \$2 million a month. This includes 2013, when the program was just beginning and expenditures were quite low in initial months. Data provided to us in the reports and the FOI show that there was no significant decrease in HSF expenditures in December of 2013 or 2014, with all of the available data indicating that over \$2 million was spend in December of both years (see Appendices C, D, E, F). How was it that there was over a \$1.4 m decrease from the average in HSF in December, 2015? Alternatively, are

1. See Appendix H, p. 1.

the reported 2015 numbers incorrect and, if so, what are the correct numbers?

2016: Black Hole

While we are releasing this report in late April, 2017, only an estimate of the surplus for 2016 has ever been publicly released. In November, 2016, TESS estimated that there would be a \$3.8 million surplus, even though there are many people who are desperate to get the HSF and don't qualify because of the restrictive policies.

No other data has been made available for 2016. We have filed FOIs for this information but, given our past experience with the process and the crisis our communities face, have decided not to wait for this information.

Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI): Paradox

TESS also makes repeated errors with respect to CHPI funds in its various reports. CHPI funds are the funds from the province that pay for the vast majority of the HSF.

Report C has an inexplicable \$700,000 difference between the total and subtotal in CHPI funding (see Appendix C, p. 5).

CHPI funding provided in Appendix F is clearly incorrect. For instance, how is it that in 2014 and 2015 millions more were spent out of CHPI

funds on the HSF than the total CHPI funding (see Table 3.5)? What seems to be the case is that the City simply failed

to properly disclose the correct amounts for these two years.

Additional FOI Issues: More False Reporting

Because there were so many different sets of data, we asked for the correct set of data, broken down by OW and ODSP. The report we received, Appendix F, said this was "na" (either not available or not applicable) even though Report E provides the total number of ineligible cases (although we are not confident this is correct, as discussed above).¹

Table 3.4 Toronto's CHPI Funding (in Millions)²

	2013	2014	2015
CHPI Funding	95.5	23.9	26.4
CHPI Portion of HSF	25.1	27.9	27.9

The information provided to us by the City in the *Freedom of Information Act* request (Appendix F) also contains several simple mathematical errors (see Table 3.4).

Table 3.4 2015 HSF Application Statistics According to TESS³

Total apps.	OW apps.	ODSP apps.	Eligible OW	Eligible ODSP	Ineligible OW	Ineligible ODSP
30830	22586	8422	19752	5286	2824	3136

These equal 31008 not 30830, a difference of 178.

These equal 30998 not 30830, a difference of 168.

1. Evictions calculated at \$800 per person, the maximum HSF for a single person for rental arrears.

2. From Appendix F, pp. 2, 3, 5.

3. Appendix F, pp. 5.

Data Discrepancy Discussion

Some of the data discrepancies, like the adding mistakes or the CHPI funding errors in Table 3.3 and Table 3.4 are relatively minor. All together, however, they are part of a pattern of troubling mishandling of important information.

More concerning, of course, are the major discrepancies. There is a million dollars of HSF money that we don't know if people got in 2014.

How many people actually got the HSF in 2013? There is a range of more than 8,000 people provided by TESS for this year.

How much money was actually spent in December, 2015? Was it really only \$583,722 or is there a significant financial discrepancy for this year as well? Is that why the City has refused to provide data for this month?

It is the same people who approve these reports and oversee the data collection that are currently drafting new HSF policies. It is these same people that designed the last round of policies to discriminate against disabled people and parents. We think this was done in order to save money.

We have established that TESS can't do simple math, at least not consistently. We have established that TESS can't calculate averages, at least not consistently. We don't think they can be trusted to redesign the HSF in a fair and equitable manner or to monitor it transparently.

Demands

Return \$18 million to Homeless Programs

The \$10 million siphoned into the City's Capital Financing and other reserves and \$8 million languishing in the Housing Allowance Reserve must be spent on addressing homelessness. Additionally, the seemingly nameless mystery housing allowance program the city spent almost \$4 million on must be accounted for and data about its operation released publicly.

Open 1,000 new beds in the downtown core

An estimated 1,000 new beds are needed to bring shelter occupancy rates down to the Council mandated 90% maximum. The City consistently fails to meet this target; any higher than 90% occupancy makes beds inaccessible and conditions intolerable. The City is continuing a policy of social cleansing in the downtown core intent on pushing homeless shelters to the outer regions of the city. Homeless people's communities, medical services, meals, drop-ins and resources are largely located in the City's downtown core.

TTC Tokens are not provided meaning that people have to travel far distances, often walking for hours, to get a bed. People unable to endure this trek, notably elders and disabled people, are forced to sleep rough. Forcing people to the outer regions for a bed each night only to have to trek downtown to access the services they need is inhumane.

Accurately collect and appropriately report HSF usage data

TESS must accurately document and report HSF usage data including: monthly breakdowns of the number of applications, eligible applications, average issuance, number of reviews requested, varied, granted in full and denied, amount of decisions reviewed by Decision Review Committee, amount varied in part and amount varied in full. All of these numbers shall be broken down by OW and ODSP. These numbers must be made available quarterly so that trends in HSF uptake can be adequately monitored.

HSF redesign must be just and accountable

The proposed redesigning of the HSF policies, including the introduction of the 'flat-rate benefit structure' should be completed by ensuring appropriate oversight, human rights protections and safeguards. Proposed changes to the HSF:

- a) must be approved by the CDRC;
- b) must be based on sound research and a clearly articulated methodology, especially when determining prices for furniture. These prices must include delivery costs, taxes, and be indexed to inflation;
- c) must not use past years' averages for modeling new payout rates. As has been demonstrated, these averages are based on unreliable data, and are often the fruit of policies based on discrimination on the grounds of family status and disability.



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Report A: TESS, Implementing the HSF: Update on the Progress to Date, April 2013
Report B: TESS, Housing Stabilization fund: Updates and New Housing Allowance, Sept., 2013
Report C: TESS, 2013 Year-End Report on HSF. April, 2013
Report D: TESS, 2014 Update on the Delivery of the HSF, March, 2015
Report E: TESS, Report For Action: Update on the Delivery of the HSF. Nov., 2016
Report F: FOI Appeal response letter and attached documents, City of Toronto. Jan. 2017.
Report G: Toronto Budget 2017**
Report H: FOI response, City of Toronto, March 2017.

Appendix A

From Report A: Implementing the Housing Stabilization Fund: Update on Progress to Date. April, 2013

Table 1: HSF Expenditures and Relevant Client Data, 1st Quarter 2013

	January	February	March	To Date
Applications/Outcomes	1496	1489	1665	4650
Eligible	1051	1133	1336	3520
\$ Issued	\$454,000	\$571,535	\$711,082	\$1,736,617
Request Reasons				Totals
Last Months Rent	436	401	422	1259
Furniture	494	558	692	1744
Rental Arrears	96	135	168	399
Energy Arrears	25	39	54	118

Appendix B

From Report B: Housing Stabilization Fund: Updates and New Housing Allowance, September, 2013

A: Update on HSF Use and Expenditure Levels

Table 1 below provides an overview of HSF take-up, expenditures and other relevant client data for the 1st and 2nd quarters of 2013. During the second quarter of 2013, 10,474 applications were submitted for HSF, with 9,828 cases receiving assistance through the fund, largely to pay for necessary furniture when establishing a residence and to pay last month's rent when relocating. Based on HSF eligibility criteria, 10% of cases were deemed ineligible.

Table 1: HSF Expenditures and Relevant Client Data, 1st and 2nd Quarter 2013

	January	February	March	April	May	June	To Date
Applications / Outcomes	1,496	1,489	1,665	3,010	4,080	3,384	15,124
Eligible	1,051	1,133	1,336	2,646	3,889	3,293	13,348
\$ Issued	\$454,000	\$571,535	\$711,082	\$1,582,629	\$2,602,404	\$2,252,943	\$8,174,593
Average Issuance	\$432	\$504	\$532	\$598	\$669	\$684	\$570
Ineligible	445	356	329	364	317	378	2,189
Request Reasons							Totals
Last Month's Rent	436	401	422	799	1,003	848	3,909
Furniture	494	558	692	1,310	1,845	1,530	6,429
Rental Arrears	96	135	168	298	528	457	1,682
Energy Arrears	25	39	54	122	212	166	618
Moving/Storage	N/A			117	301	292	710

In response to the initial demand and take up of HSF, TESS has taken a number of steps since April 2013, improving both communication and eligibility criteria. These are detailed in Appendix B.

Overall, TESS' improved experience with HSF in the second quarter of 2013 demonstrates that the division has been successful in addressing the issues relating to the initial low uptake of HSF.

Since April 2013, when the changes to HSF were made, uptake for the fund has improved substantially as demonstrated by the following:

- Only 10% of clients were found to be ineligible for HSF funding in Q2 of 2013, compared to 24% of applicants found to be ineligible in Q1 2013.
- The number of applications for HSF has increased enormously, from 1,496 in January 2013 to 3,384 in June 2013.
- The average issuance has increased by 58% since January 2013.
- The amount of money issued monthly was nearly five times higher in June 2013, as compared to January 2013.

Attachment 1 - HSF Expenditures and Utilization, 2013

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	TOTALS
Applications*	1711	1673	1951	3825	5114	4337	4702	4259	3840	4221	3769	3152	42,554
Eligible	1211	1251	1525	3399	4710	3983	4285	3892	3503	3875	3371	2773	37,778
\$ Issued	\$440,791	\$655,987	\$814,159	\$1,851,900	\$3,058,934	\$2,747,836	\$2,975,485	\$2,727,788	\$2,536,029	\$2,801,131	\$2,383,645	\$2,070,476	\$25,064,161
Avg Issuance	\$407	\$460	\$468	\$558	\$640	\$650	\$646	\$631	\$641	\$617	\$613	\$605	\$606 (avg.)
Reviews	72	67	75	52	56	38	29	36	25	25	56	23	554
Eligible Request Reasons													
Essential Furniture	498	678	890	1630	2259	1971	2230	2096	1854	2117	1851	1651	19,725
Rent Deposit	444	521	570	1017	1256	1137	1262	1147	1103	1337	1109	1031	11,934
Rent Arrears	107	172	212	371	631	536	485	457	449	456	378	316	4,570
Moving/Storage	3	9	10	159	421	410	487	482	424	490	404	332	3,631
Hydro/Fuel Arrears	31	47	59	143	214	175	145	141	125	135	145	86	1,446
Unit Prep/Shelter Support**	0	0	0	0	5	1	208	3	3	3	2	9	234

* includes OSDP applications

** includes unit preparation for bed bug treatment and pay-directs for clients' rent due to a provincial technical error in May 2013.

Note: The total number of eligible request reasons is higher than the number of eligible cases as clients are able to access HSF for multiple reasons.

Appendix C

From Report C: 2013 Year-End Report on HSF, April, 2014

Attachment 2 – HSF Expenditures and Utilization 2013 – 2014

2013 Expenditure and Utilization

Description	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Total YTD Oct. 2013	Nov	Dec	Total 2013
Applications*	1,653	1,661	1,704	3,006	4,036	3,349	3,677	3,292	2,989	3,329	28,696	3,022	2,605	34,323
Eligible*	1,168	1,234	1,276	2,583	3,611	2,989	3,252	2,917	2,643	2,971	24,644	2,613	2,199	29,456
\$ Issued	\$440,791	\$655,987	\$814,159	\$1,851,900	\$3,058,934	\$2,747,836	\$2,975,485	\$2,727,788	\$2,536,029	\$2,801,131	20,610,040	\$2,383,645	\$2,070,476	25,064,161
Avg. Issuance Per Eligible Application	\$377	\$532	\$638	\$717	\$847	\$919	\$915	\$935	\$960	\$943	\$836	\$912	\$942	\$851
Reviews*	72	67	75	52	56	38	29	36	25	25	475	56	23	554

2014 Expenditure and Utilization

Description	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Total YTD Oct. 2014	Nov**	Dec**	Total 2014
Applications*	2991	2655	2858	2656	2928	2889	2954	2651	2784	2915	28,281	2164	2174	32,619
Eligible*	2561	2258	2508	2330	2531	2392	2382	2150	2253	2392	23,757	1695	1759	27,211
\$ Issued**	2,151,994	2,032,017	2,264,933	2,118,940	2,312,087	2,209,517	2,126,099	1,978,309	2,036,064	2,312,360	21,542,320	N/A	N/A	N/A
Avg. Issuance Per Eligible Application	\$840	\$900	\$903	\$909	\$914	\$924	\$893	\$920	\$904	\$967	\$907	N/A	N/A	N/A
Reviews*	41	45	47	40	28	63	97	69	63	67	560	66	51	677

* Includes ODSP applications.

** Due to the implementation of new provincial Social Assistance Management System (SAMS) in November 2014, full year numbers for HSF expenditures are not available for November and December 2014 payment amounts.

Appendix E

From Report E: Report For Action: Update on the Delivery of the HSF November, 2016

Attachment 1: Key HSF Statistics 2013 - 2015

Table 1: Reasons for Requests in 2015 (including ineligible requests)

Reason for Request	Total # Requests 2015	%
Furniture	22,224	46%
Last Months Rent	14,092	29%
Rental Arrears	4,639	9%
Energy Arrears	1,927	4%
Moving Costs	5,732	12%
Total Requests	48,614	100%

Table 2: Applications Found Ineligible 2013 – 2015

Cases by Social Assistance Program	2013		2014		2015	
	Cases	%	Cases	%	Cases	%
Ineligible – OW	2,406	9%	2,444	10%	2,824	12%
Ineligible – ODSP	1,613	23%	2,652	32%	3,136	47%
Total (both programs)	4,019	14%	5,096	16%	5,959	19%

Table 3: Number of Decision Reviews and Outcomes of Decision Review Committee (DRC)

# of Decision Reviews (2015)	% that went to DRC	% that were upheld by DRC	% that were reversed or varied by DRC
346	15%	80%	20%

Table 4: Maximum HSF Allowance by Family Size

Family Size	Maximum Allowance
Singles and Couples	\$1,600
Families with Adult Dependants	\$2,000

Family Size	Maximum Allowance
Families with Children	\$3,000

Table 5: HSF Expenditures, 2013-2015

2013	2014	2015
25,064,161	24,487,053	24,872,679

Table 6: HSF Funding, 2013 – 2016 (\$ Million)

Source of Funding	2013	2014	2015	2016
CHPI Funding	20.200	23.900	26.432	26.432
One-Time Provincial Funding	6.800	2.532	-	-
Property taxes	1.525	1.525	1.525	1.525
Total	28.525	27.957	27.957	27.957

Freedom of Information Request # for the years 2013, 2014, 2015, & 2016

Year - 2013

Questions 1 - 3

Amt of CHPI Funding received by the City of Toronto from the Gov. of Ont.	How much of the CHPI funding was allocated to the HSF	Complete year end Expenditures & Utilization Report	
95.5m	25.1m	Attached	

Question 3 (1 - 12)

Total # of Applications rec'd	# of applications rec'd from OW recipients	# of applications rec'd from ODSF recipients	# of eligible applications rec'd from OW recipients	# of eligible applications rec'd from ODSF recipients	# of ineligible applications rec'd from OW recipients	# of ineligible applications rec'd from ODSF recipients	Actual amount of HSF expended	Average amount of HSF issued per recipient	# of applications that underwent an Internal Review of the original decision	# of applications where the initial decision was upheld upon an Internal Review	# of applications where the initial decision was overturned upon an Internal Review
42,554	na		37,778		4776		25,064m	606.	554	259	295

Question 3 (13 & 14) – Number of eligible HSF requests sorted by the following "reason for request" criteria:

Furniture	Last Month's Rent	Rental Arrears	Energy Arrears	Moving
19,725	11,934	4570	1446	3631

Question 3 (14) – Number of ineligible HSF requests sorted by the following "reason for request" criteria:

Furniture	Last Month's Rent	Rental Arrears	Energy Arrears	Moving
1900	998	113	257	283

Request # 4 – Service Standards Document referred on page 11 of the 2013 Year End Report on Housing Stabilization Fund prepared by TESS on April 2, 2014 - Attached

Freedom of Information Request # for the years 2013, 2014, 2015

Year - 2014

Questions 1 - 3

Amt of CHPI Funding received by the City of Toronto from the Gov. of Ont.	How much of the CHPI funding was allocated to the HSF	Complete year end Expenditures & Utilization Report	
23.9	27.9m	24.5m	

Question 3 (1 - 12)

Total # of Applications rec'd	# of applications rec'd from OW recipients	# of applications rec'd from ODSP recipients	# of eligible applications rec'd from OW recipients	# of eligible applications rec'd from ODSP recipients	# of ineligible applications rec'd from OW recipients	# of ineligible applications rec'd from ODSP recipients	Actual amount of HSF expended	Average amount of HSF issued per recipient	# of applications that underwent an internal Review of the original decision	# of applications where the initial decision was upheld upon an Internal Review	# of applications where the initial decision was overturned upon an Internal Review
32243	23860	8383	21416	3287	2444	2652	24.5m	615	668	259	295

Question 3 (13 & 14) – Number of eligible HSF requests sorted by the following "reason for request" criteria:

Furniture	Last Month's Rent	Rental Arrears	Energy Arrears	Moving
17255	9859	3331	8977	4318

Question 3 (14) – Number of ineligible HSF requests sorted by the following "reason for request" criteria:

Furniture	Last Month's Rent	Rental Arrears	Energy Arrears	Moving
2163	1315	665	318	583

Freedom of Information Request # for the years 2013, 2014, 2015

Year - 2015

Questions 1 - 3

Amt of CHPI Funding received by the City of Toronto from the Gov. of Ont.	How much of the CHPI funding was allocated to the HSF	Complete year end Expenditures & Utilization Report	
26.4m	27.9m	24.9m	

Question 3 (1 - 12)

Total # of Applications rec'd	# of applications rec'd from OW recipients	# of applications rec'd from ODSP recipients	# of eligible applications rec'd from OW recipients	# of eligible applications rec'd from ODSP recipients	# of ineligible applications rec'd from OW recipients	# of ineligible applications rec'd from ODSP recipients	Actual amount of HSF expended	Average amount of HSF issued per recipient	# of applications that underwent an Internal Review of the original decision	# of applications where the initial decision was upheld upon an Internal Review	# of applications where the initial decision was overturned upon an Internal Review
30830	22586	8422	19752	5286	2824	3136	24.9m	685	517	313	174

Question 3 (13 & 14) – Number of eligible HSF requests sorted by the following "reason for request" criteria:

Furniture	Last Month's Rent	Rental Arrears	Energy Arrears	Moving
18,887	11,898	3763	1562	4675

Question 3 (14) – Number of ineligible HSF requests sorted by the following "reason for request" criteria:

Furniture	Last Month's Rent	Rental Arrears	Energy Arrears	Moving
3337	2194	876	365	1057

Housing Stabilization Fund

SDMT Code	Description	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	Total 2013
Payment Amount														
507 FURNITURE/HOUSEHOLD GOOD/PPRS		139,466	286,361	360,636	901,262	1,703,606	1,543,954	1,737,783	1,644,200	1,471,904	1,639,400	1,414,502	1,238,911	14,061,987
509 RENTAL ARREARS		65,930	108,415	131,007	261,495	413,654	379,301	317,569	280,478	306,070	304,278	237,054	205,425	3,009,676
511 MOVING/STORAGE EXPENSES		800	3,668	4,074	58,368	147,435	134,347	164,621	166,580	145,304	166,594	128,205	115,652	1,235,647
516 UTILITY DEPOSIT/DISCONNECTION							1,187	314	1,662	650	1,409	1,502	6,927	13,640
520 LAST MONTH'S RENT DEPOSIT		223,721	258,072	287,599	556,099	690,475	611,091	642,289	572,980	550,492	633,973	544,167	468,224	6,037,181
522 HYDRO ARREARS		10,485	17,054	29,464	63,731	83,876	63,594	45,731	48,093	48,800	42,176	44,889	31,834	529,738
524 FUEL ARREARS		399	2,407	1,379	10,946	18,588	14,362	13,582	13,806	13,809	13,301	13,325	5,503	121,387
536 SHELTER FUND ENHANCEMENT						1,300		53,596						54,896
SHELTER SUPPLEMENT														
Total 2013		440,791	685,987	814,158	1,851,900	3,058,934	2,747,836	2,975,485	2,727,788	2,536,029	2,801,131	2,383,645	2,070,476	25,064,161
Number of Payments														
507 FURNITURE/HOUSEHOLD GOOD/PPRS		498	678	890	1,630	2,259	1,971	2,230	2,096	1,854	2,117	1,851	1,651	19,725
509 RENTAL ARREARS		107	172	212	371	631	536	485	457	449	456	378	316	4,570
511 MOVING/STORAGE EXPENSES		3	9	10	159	421	410	487	482	424	490	404	332	3,631
516 UTILITY DEPOSIT/DISCONNECTION							1		3	3	3	2	9	21
520 LAST MONTH'S RENT DEPOSIT		444	521	570	1,017	1,286	1,137	1,282	1,147	1,103	1,337	1,109	1,030	11,983
522 HYDRO ARREARS		30	40	56	123	179	153	120	117	105	113	124	72	1,232
524 FUEL ARREARS		1	7	3	20	35	22	25	24	20	22	21	14	214
Total 2013		1,083	1,427	1,741	3,320	4,781	4,230	4,609	4,326	3,958	4,538	3,889	3,424	41,326
Average Issuance		407	460	468	558	640	650	646	631	641	617	613	605	606
SDMT Code Description		January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	Total 2014
Payment Amount														
507 FURNITURE/HOUSEHOLD GOOD/PPRS		1,200,092	1,126,946	1,231,147	1,186,075	1,291,792	1,211,555	1,199,559	1,081,669	1,157,751	1,321,964	1,052,052	1,193,204	14,251,866
509 RENTAL ARREARS		291,666	258,931	302,169	222,652	229,889	256,731	254,867	218,141	220,033	221,391	172,657	238,958	2,883,084
511 MOVING/STORAGE EXPENSES		124,033	122,681	118,842	132,275	145,919	144,763	147,624	139,741	125,428	136,992	116,731	105,189	1,562,278
516 UTILITY DEPOSIT/DISCONNECTION		3,803	4,721	3,889	10,351	6,704	8,908	2,383	8,656	11,210	23,279	9,686	28,833	96,483
520 LAST MONTH'S RENT DEPOSIT		492,464	471,890	533,623	492,722	546,620	503,100	443,291	469,775	464,043	538,618	420,070	519,210	5,897,417
522 HYDRO ARREARS		33,240	43,658	67,094	63,522	75,174	72,768	67,913	46,624	48,972	54,232	34,759	69,718	677,676
524 FUEL ARREARS		6,635	3,200	8,169	12,344	15,990	11,690	9,453	13,683	8,627	13,883	7,684	11,854	123,214
536 SHELTER FUND ENHANCEMENT														
SHELTER SUPPLEMENT														
Total 2014		2,151,594	2,032,017	2,264,933	2,118,940	2,312,087	2,209,517	2,128,089	1,978,309	2,036,064	2,312,380	1,813,638	2,136,020	25,491,978
Year-Over-Year Growth		1,771,203	1,376,030	1,450,774	267,040	(746,847)	(538,320)	(849,385)	(749,479)	(499,965)	(488,771)	(570,007)	65,544	427,816
Number of Payments														
507 FURNITURE/HOUSEHOLD GOOD/PPRS		1,667	1,568	1,713	1,601	1,709	1,625	1,616	1,461	1,573	1,772	1,362	1,515	19,192
509 RENTAL ARREARS		422	360	371	285	318	347	344	312	279	296	225	296	3,867
511 MOVING/STORAGE EXPENSES		383	375	365	398	410	401	407	384	384	410	303	304	4,534
516 UTILITY DEPOSIT/DISCONNECTION		6	7	5	14	9	13	3	13	15	29	9	4	127
520 LAST MONTH'S RENT DEPOSIT		1,066	1,011	1,063	994	1,156	1,102	1,016	962	990	1,076	781	954	12,191
522 HYDRO ARREARS		73	97	133	134	161	136	130	93	90	111	77	131	1,366
524 FUEL ARREARS		15	6	16	17	24	19	19	24	16	23	14	18	211
Total 2014		3,672	3,424	3,666	3,443	3,787	3,643	3,535	3,259	3,347	3,719	2,761	3,222	41,478
Average Issuance		586	593	618	615	611	607	601	607	608	622	657	653	615

Housing Stabilization Fund

SDMT Code	Description	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	Total 2015
Payment Amount														
507	FURNITURE/HOUSEHOLD GOOD/PPRS	1,157,066	1,112,229	1,209,626	1,092,660	1,194,649	1,173,918	1,223,580	1,049,725	1,209,324	1,199,957	1,083,637	1,083,637	12,706,391
509	RENTAL ARREARS	312,512	281,803	349,935	344,680	277,784	271,565	283,629	240,564	208,526	242,419	224,274	224,274	3,018,091
511	MOVING/STORAGE EXPENSES	101,164	100,995	116,614	112,453	136,271	126,236	137,239	125,481	134,180	125,958	101,609	101,609	1,318,201
516	UTILITY DEPOSIT/DISCONNECTION	-	1,576	-	83,756	30,177	8,525	23,420	68,494	27,610	26,690	18,126	18,126	288,372
520	LAST MONTH'S RENT DEPOSIT	559,267	470,123	561,825	542,986	557,314	571,228	583,903	516,546	578,678	529,229	569,378	569,378	6,040,277
522	HYDRO ARREARS	60,659	59,653	68,591	81,940	112,517	96,323	97,887	41,452	60,963	62,027	61,007	61,007	803,218
524	FUEL ARREARS	9,678	3,047	6,330	13,369	17,847	15,358	9,561	15,337	7,265	9,372	7,244	7,244	114,408
536	SHELTER FUND ENHANCEMENT	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total 2015		2,200,366	2,009,627	2,312,721	2,271,844	2,326,559	2,263,153	2,359,219	2,057,998	2,226,544	2,195,652	2,085,274	2,085,274	24,288,957
Overpayment Recoveries														
		(166,373)	(145,860)	(166,966)	(265,564)	(210,222)	(177,035)	(186,291)	(166,920)	(141,694)	(129,742)	(141,244)	(141,244)	(1,911,919)
Number of Payments														
507	FURNITURE/HOUSEHOLD GOOD/PPRS	1,352	1,515	1,509	1,466	1,535	1,524	1,541	1,350	1,542	1,516	1,432	1,432	16,282
509	RENTAL ARREARS	225	296	399	346	336	323	324	241	239	278	260	260	3,267
511	MOVING/STORAGE EXPENSES	303	304	275	289	386	365	383	371	372	349	307	307	3,704
516	UTILITY DEPOSIT/DISCONNECTION	9	4	-	4	23	11	22	56	24	26	17	17	196
520	LAST MONTH'S RENT DEPOSIT	781	954	1,045	882	998	1,022	975	894	963	907	943	943	10,364
522	HYDRO ARREARS	77	131	136	141	204	171	164	97	113	121	122	122	1,477
524	FUEL ARREARS	14	18	18	8	26	22	12	22	15	17	6	6	178
Total 2015		2,761	3,222	3,382	3,136	3,508	3,438	3,421	3,031	3,268	3,214	3,087	3,087	35,468
Average Issuance		797	624	684	724	663	658	690	679	681	683	669	#DIV/0!	685

Employment & Social Services - Customer Service Standards

Employment & Social Services' vision is to strengthen the social and economic well-being of Torontonians in their communities. Our mission is to provide employment services, financial benefits and social supports that make our vision a reality. Our work is to:

- develop and provide integrated employment services, supports and opportunities
- deliver financial benefits
- advocate for policies, programs and services that better support Torontonians in their communities
- invest in skilled staff at all levels to respond to a dynamic environment

We deliver services in three main areas:

- employment
- financial assistance
- social supports

Toronto Employment & Social Services is dedicated to delivering high-quality service. You can expect:

- to be treated with dignity and respect
- professional, prompt and polite service
- to be provided with up-to-date information in a timely manner
- that staff will respect your privacy and confidentiality.
- staff to work with you to develop a plan based on your needs

You can also expect the following service standards:

- You will be seen or acknowledged within 15 minutes of your scheduled appointment time
- Should you visit our office without an appointment and request assistance you will be registered at reception and will be acknowledged by staff within 15 minutes
- Should you have a complaint about the service you receive, or disagree with a decision about your case, you can speak with a member of the management team within 30 minutes
- Voicemail messages will be returned within one business day

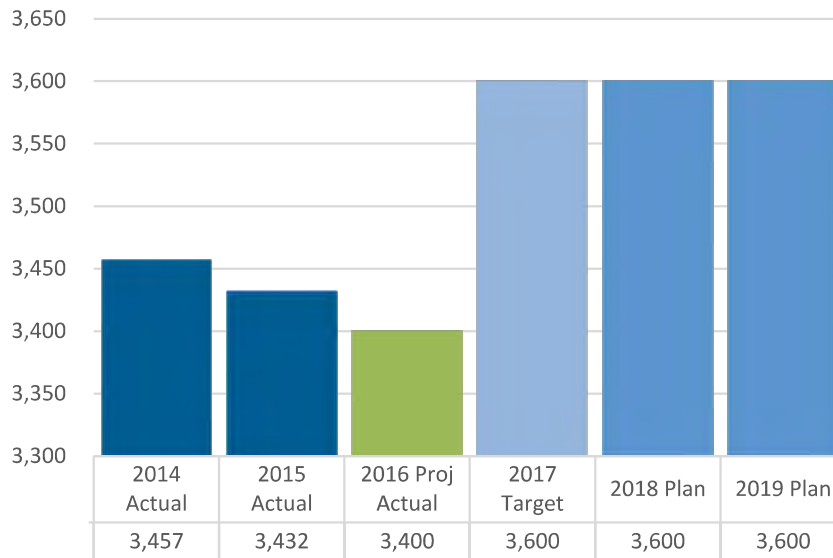
Appendix G: Monthly HSF Payments

2017 Operating Budget

Toronto Employment and Social Services

Service Performance Measures

Number of Monthly Housing Stabilization Fund Payments



- The number of Housing Stabilization Fund payments that have remained flat from 2014 to 2016, are projected to increase by 200 payments to 3,600 payments in 2017 and onwards due to proposed changes in eligibility criteria.
- HSF provides resources to prevent evictions and assists OW and ODSP clients to obtain housing, retain their housing or relocate to more appropriate or affordable accommodation.

- Written correspondence will be answered within five business days following receipt of a letter
- You can expect staff to work with you to develop a service plan that meets your needs, which includes:
 - a review of programs and service options
 - referrals to appropriate programs
 - a mutually agreed upon follow-up appointment based on your service plan goals

Providing excellent service is important to us. If you would like to speak to someone about the service you are receiving, please ask to speak to a supervisor or office manager. If you have compliments or complaints, you may also call our Client Services and Information Unit at 416-392-2956.

Appendix H: Freedom of Information Act Request

Response to FOI Request 2017-00044

Q. #1

The discrepancy in the publicly reported Housing Stabilization Fund Expenditures and Utilization numbers for 2013.

Response:

As reported on page 5 of the 2013 year end Staff Report on the Housing Stabilization Fund dated April 17, 2014, the actual HSF expenditures in 2013 equaled \$25.1 million. This figure is correctly reported out on the Housing Stabilization Fund Expenditures under the Payment Amount total for 2013.

Also reported in the Staff Report is the Number of Payments which totaled \$41,326 which can be misleading as this number reflects actual payments (e.g. cheques) issued which is based on individual items requested and not on actual applications which can include multiple items (e.g. Last Month's Rent, Furniture, and Moving).

On page 13 of the Staff Report the expenditures listed (issued) are correct at \$25,064,161 which is also indicated in the chart on page 5.

Concerns with the reliability of the data in the HSF Tracking Tool, which does not include HSF Expenditures or Payments, have been reported in various Staff Reports. The database was developed and implemented quickly to meet the implementation date of Jan. 5th 2013. Therefore, variances in some data have been detected. Initially, data collection from the HSF Tracking Tool did not allow for a distinction in the data between the OW and ODSP programs. The Tracking Tool is also a static database where data can change over time, e.g. records/applications requiring deletion, the duplication of applications, and applications where the original decision of eligible or ineligible was changed to reflect the final eligibility decision.

The Staff Report Action Required dated April 17, 2014 states, *"It should also be noted that because TESS had limited time to establish the HSF, the technology to support the program was developed quickly. Staff have recognized the need to enhance the capabilities of the technology in order to improve data capturing and reporting. Therefore, ongoing refinements have been and continue to be made to better convey, review and analyze the data on HSF utilization"*.

Also, as noted in the Report for Action dated November 29, 2016, *"As a result of the implementation of Social Assistance Management System (SAMS) in 2015, improvements to the HSF tracking tool were put on hold as divisional resources were committed to addressing the complex issues resulting from the implementation of the new technology. With SAMS now stabilized, improvements will be made to the HSF Tracking Tool used to accurately monitor the Fund's delivery. The majority of these changes will be implemented in January 2017, with improvements to data collection and monitoring occurring throughout the first quarter of 2017"*.

Note: the request was for "all records pertaining to the discrepancy in publicly reported Housing Stabilization Fund expenditures and utilization numbers for 2013."

SWMT Code	Description	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	Total 2013
Payment Amount														
507	FURNITURE/HOUSEHOLD GOODS/REPS	139,466	266,361	360,636	901,262	1,703,606	1,543,864	1,737,783	1,644,200	1,471,994	1,639,400	1,444,502	1,238,911	14,061,987
509	RENTAL ARREARS	66,500	108,445	131,007	261,485	413,664	379,301	317,569	280,478	306,070	304,278	227,064	206,425	3,009,676
511	MOVING/STORAGE EXPENSES	800	3,668	4,074	59,388	447,485	134,547	164,621	166,590	146,304	166,594	128,206	115,662	1,285,647
516	UTILITY DEPOSIT/CONNECTION						1,167	314	1,662	660	1,409	1,502	6,927	13,940
520	LAST MONTHS RENT DEPOSIT	223,721	236,072	267,599	566,099	680,475	611,091	642,289	572,980	550,492	633,973	544,167	466,224	6,037,181
522	HYDRO ARREARS	10,465	17,064	26,464	63,731	63,876	63,594	46,731	46,093	46,800	42,176	44,889	31,834	629,738
524	FUEL ARREARS	369	2,407	1,379	10,946	18,388	14,862	13,662	13,806	13,809	13,301	13,325	5,503	127,397
536	SHELTER FUND ENHANCEMENT					1,300		63,566						64,866
	SHELTER SUPPLEMENT													
Total 2013		440,791	666,907	814,159	1,861,300	3,069,934	2,717,236	2,975,485	2,717,788	2,536,029	2,801,131	2,583,846	2,070,476	26,064,161
Number of Payments														
507	FURNITURE/HOUSEHOLD GOODS/REPS	498	678	880	1,630	2,299	1,971	2,230	2,086	1,854	2,117	1,851	1,661	19,725
509	RENTAL ARREARS	107	112	212	371	631	536	465	467	449	456	378	316	4,570
511	MOVING/STORAGE EXPENSES	3	9	10	169	421	410	467	482	424	490	404	332	3,631
516	UTILITY DEPOSIT/CONNECTION						1		3	3	3	2	9	21
520	LAST MONTHS RENT DEPOSIT	444	521	570	1,077	1,266	1,137	1,262	1,147	1,103	1,337	1,109	1,000	11,933
522	HYDRO ARREARS	30	40	56	123	179	163	120	117	106	113	124	72	1,232
524	FUEL ARREARS	1	7	3	20	35	22	25	24	20	22	21	14	214
Total 2013		1,103	1,427	1,741	3,320	4,791	4,230	4,609	4,326	3,993	4,538	3,889	3,424	47,326
	Average Issuance	407	460	498	553	640	650	646	631	641	617	613	605	606

Appendix I: Email Correspondence with Anna Fiorino

From: Anna Fiorino <Anna.Fiorino@toronto.ca>
Date: Thu, Apr 13, 2017 at 5:34 PM
Subject: Response to HSF questions
To: "yogi.ocap@gmail.com" <yogi.ocap@gmail.com>
Cc: Patricia Walcott <Patricia.Walcott@toronto.ca>

Hi Yogi,

Following our telephone conversation yesterday, and your subsequent voicemail request this morning, below is the response to your questions related to the Housing Stabilization Fund, the allocation of surplus funds and the administration of the housing allowance reserve.

As your questions required confirmation and input from other City Divisions, this information is being provided to you on behalf of Toronto Employment and Social Services (TESS), Shelter Support and Housing Administration (SSHA) and Corporate Financial Planning & Management Divisions.

1. 2013 Surplus funds

Attached for your reference is Community Development and Recreation Committee report, dated September 4, 2013 titled 'Housing Stabilization Fund: Updates and New Housing Allowance'.

There are two recommendations (recommendations #2 and #4 of the attached report) that speak to the same \$3.7 million surplus. There are two recommendations required to receive the authority to transfer the \$3.7 million surplus from one Division (TESS) to the other (SSHA) in order for the funds to be ultimately applied to the Housing Stabilization Reserve from SSHA.

2. 2014 and 2015 Surplus

Please find attached the Surplus Management Policy approved by the City Council, that authorizes the Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer, starting with fiscal 2005, to apply additional surplus, in priority order to:

(a) Capital Financing Reserve Fund (at least 75 percent of the additional surplus); and

(b) the remainder to fund any underfunded liabilities, and/or reserves/reserve funds, as determined by the Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer;

In 2014/2015 TESS recorded surpluses, a portion of which are attributed to HSF, this surplus was distributed in accordance with the Surplus Management policy. I am attaching the 2014 and 2015 year end variance reports that show how the surplus was distributed (2014 - Page 5 and Page 6 for 2015).

3. Administration of the Housing Allowance Reserve

With regards to your questions around the administration of the Housing Allowance Reserve, please note that staff from SSHA will provide you with this information as early as possible next week.

It is our understanding that the information provided within this email responds to your various emails and phone calls on this subject.

The information you have requested through your Freedom of Information (FOI) requests will be provided to you through the established FOI protocol.

Thank you,

Anna

Ontario Coalition Against Poverty

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The Ontario Coalition Against Poverty is a direct action poor people's organization. We fight for social and economic justice for poor and marginalized communities in Toronto and beyond.

