



Draft 2006 Budget

- The staff have worked very hard to prepare the *draft 2006 budget*. Given all of the recent announcements regarding Best Start, land ambulance funding and the new funding model for Ontario Works, it makes it extremely difficult to prepare an annual budget. There are many variables & outstanding items which have the potential to impact our budget this year.
- Having just returned from vacation, it was exciting to see that the Ministry of Health & Long Term Care has announced its commitment to provide designated delivery agents of land ambulance with 50% of the actual costs to deliver services. This has been a long time coming.
- We anticipate a detailed announcement regarding our First Nations and unincorporated funding for land ambulance by the end of the month.
- Given the uncertainty with Best Start funding over the long-term, portions of the Plan must be put on hold. There are long-standing issues, however, which will continue to be addressed. We hope to address gaps that were identified prior to the devolution of child care services.
- The move to a more employment-based Ontario Works service places a huge amount of responsibility on our Caseworkers. Given our limited human resources, the new targets will pose significant challenges for us in the Rainy River District.
- Over this coming year, it is imperative that we continue to lobby the Province for support of our housing portfolio. Given the severe inadequacies in capital reserve funding and the potential for major costs in the future, we must work closely with our counterparts to ensure that those reserve requirements are met. As providers find it increasingly difficult to manage within the legislated requirements, our staff become increasingly burdened with the additional work required to support the providers through difficult times.

Thank you to the staff & Board Committees in preparing the draft budget(s) for 2006!
Good work!

Respectfully Submitted,
Donna Dittaro, CAO