UNDERSTANDING THE DRRSB:

A GUIDE FOR MUNICIPAL COUNCILS AND PROSPECTIVE BOARD MEMBERS

DISTRICT OF RAINY RIVER
SERVICES BOARD



INTRODUCTION

The District of Rainy River Services Board (DRRSB) plans, funds, manages and delivers essential human services across the Rainy River District, including housing and homelessness prevention, Ontario Works, children's services and paramedic services.

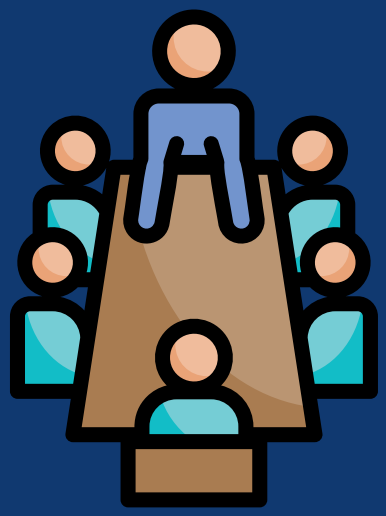
These services affect community safety, workforce participation, economic development, public health and the long-term sustainability of our communities.

The DRRSB provides a shared district structure for services that are too complex, costly and highly regulated for individual municipalities to administer separately. Municipalities remain important partners. They help fund the DRRSB, appoint most Board members and contribute local knowledge, resources and leadership to district solutions.

Serving on the Board is therefore more than overseeing another organization. It is an opportunity to influence essential services and major public investments affecting the future of the Rainy River District.

This Guide will held you to understand the following:

1. What Is the DRRSB?
2. What Does the DRRSB Do?
3. How Is the DRRSB Funded?
4. What Does the Board Do?
5. Why Consider Serving?



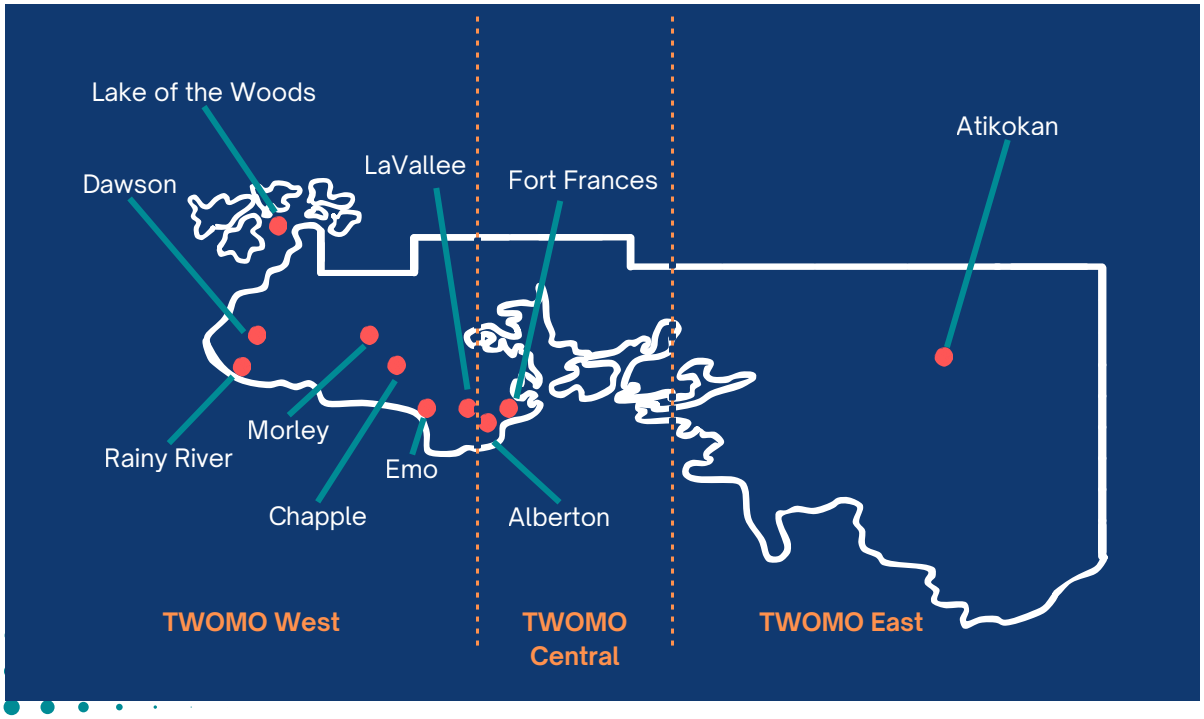
WHAT IS THE DRRSB?

The Rainy River District Social Services Administration Board, operating as the District of Rainy River Services Board, was established by the Province in the late 1990s. It serves 10 municipalities, nine First Nations communities and three territories without municipal organization (TWOMO), and works with community, health, housing, employer and other partners across the district.

The Board includes municipal representatives appointed by their councils and representatives selected from the district's territories without municipal organization.

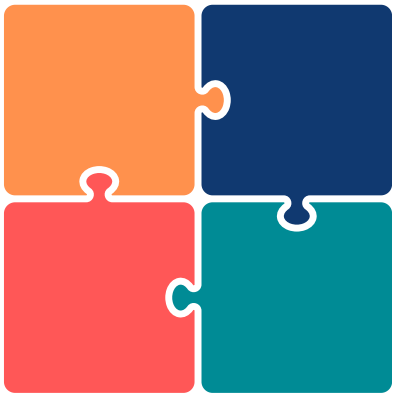
Board composition, member qualifications and terms are established through provincial legislation and regulation.

Under the *District Social Services Administration Boards Act*, the DRRSB is a separate corporation with responsibilities assigned through provincial legislation. The Act also establishes a framework for apportioning costs for prescribed services among municipalities.



WHAT DOES THE DRRSB DO?

Housing and Homelessness Prevention



Children's Services

Ontario Works

Paramedic Services

Housing and Homelessness Prevention

The DRRSB is the provincially designated service manager for housing and homelessness prevention in the Rainy River District. Responsibilities include planning, providing rent-geared-to-income assistance, management of DRRSB housing assets, homelessness prevention and administration of provincial and federal housing programs.

The *Housing Services Act, 2011* establishes important service manager responsibilities, including requirements related to housing and homelessness plans, housing administration and applicable service levels.

Housing and homelessness cannot be solved by the DRRSB alone. Municipalities control or influence important local matters such as land-use planning, zoning and infrastructure, while provincial and federal governments control other important funding and policy levers. Effective solutions therefore require collaboration among governments, Indigenous communities, housing providers, health and community organizations and the private sector.

Municipal participation will look different from project to project. It can include land, planning support, local data, resolutions of support, advocacy, in-kind assistance or, where appropriate, financial investment.

Ontario Works

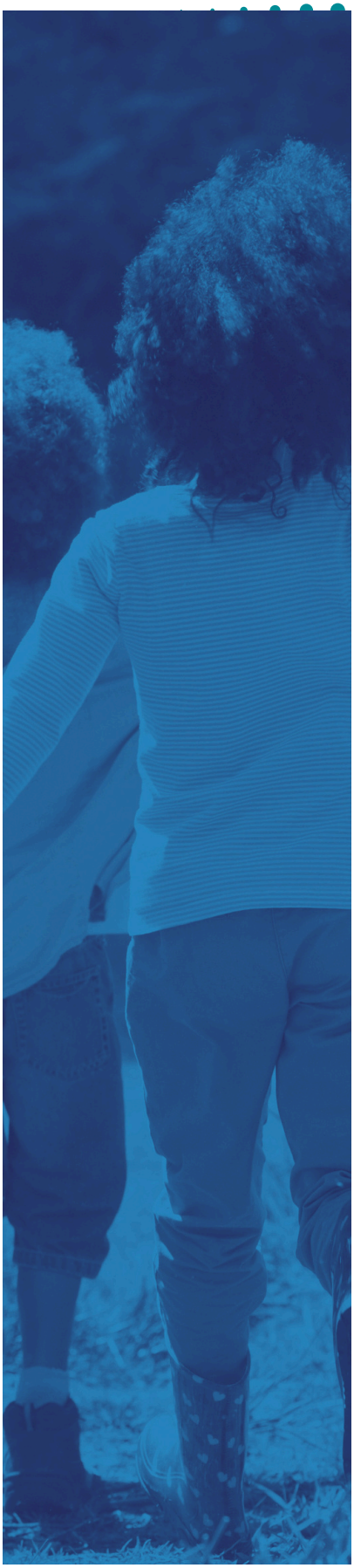
The DRRSB administers Ontario Works across the district, providing eligible residents with financial assistance and employment-related supports. Effective delivery also requires partnerships with employers, training organizations, health and social services, municipalities, Indigenous organizations and community partners.

Children's Services

The DRRSB is responsible for local child care and early years system management and directly operates child care and EarlyON Child and Family Centre services.

Responsibilities include planning, provincial funding administration, supporting licensed operators, improving access and affordability, responding to workforce pressures and planning for the retention or expansion of licensed spaces.

Reliable child care supports workforce participation, employee recruitment and retention and community economic development. Municipalities can contribute through local planning, land or facility opportunities, infrastructure coordination and advocacy for capital investment and additional spaces.



Paramedic Services

Through Rainy River District Paramedic Services, the DRRSB is responsible for land ambulance service across a large, rural and geographically dispersed district. The *Ambulance Act* establishes the legislative framework within which these responsibilities are delivered.

Responsibilities include emergency medical response, stations, vehicles and equipment, workforce readiness, provincial requirements, service planning and community paramedicine. Effective emergency response also depends on strong relationships with municipalities, hospitals, health providers, fire, police and other emergency partners.

Partnership Matters

The DRRSB has a district-wide mandate, but its services operate within communities.

Housing requires land, infrastructure and approvals. Child care depends on facilities, workforce and community planning. Paramedic services rely on roads, emergency planning and local infrastructure. Ontario Works participants depend on local employment, transportation and support services.

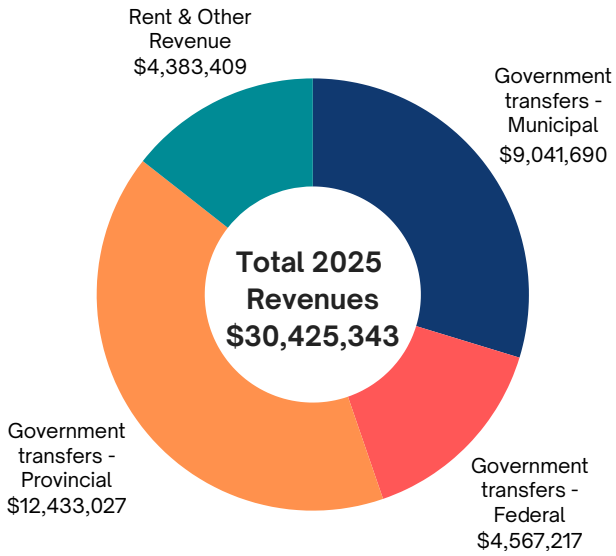
Municipalities are not expected to administer DRRSB programs or manage individual service matters. They are, however, important partners in identifying needs, coordinating local solutions and helping position viable projects for provincial and federal investment.

Partnership does not necessarily mean additional municipal spending. It can include sharing local data, identifying land or facilities, coordinating planning and infrastructure, supporting applications, contributing expertise or in-kind resources and advocating jointly for investment. The strongest solutions recognize the different responsibilities and resources of each partner and bring them together around an achievable plan.

HOW IS THE DRRSB FUNDED?

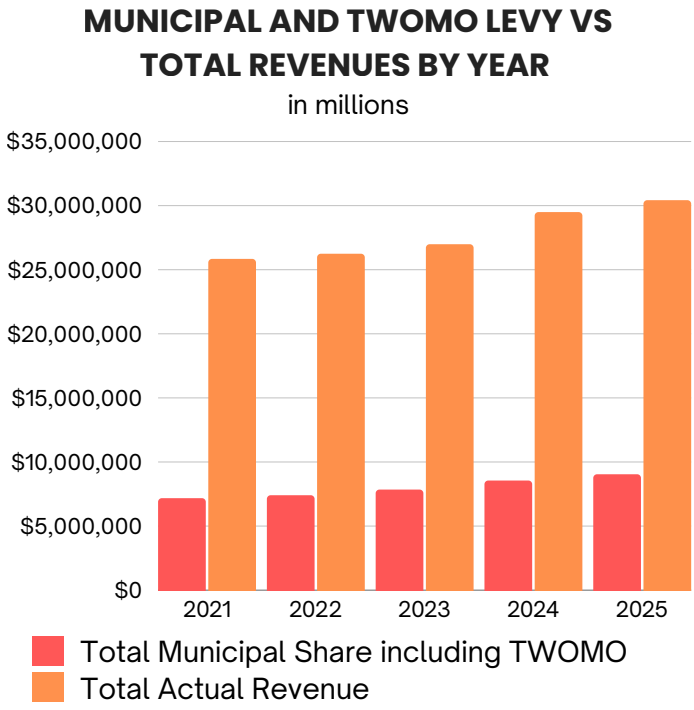
The DRRSB receives funding from a number of sources, including:

- **Provincial and federal governments;**
- **Municipal levy contributions;**
- **Contributions associated with territories without municipal organization;**
- **Housing rental revenue;**
- **Child care user revenues;**
- **Program-specific grants; and**
- **Other revenues.**



Funding arrangements vary by service. Some programs are substantially or fully provincially funded, while others require a municipal or local contribution. Funding may also be ongoing, time-limited or project-specific.

The District Social Services Administration Boards Act requires the DRRSB to determine and apportion the municipal share of costs for prescribed services. Municipal levy is therefore part of the legislated district funding model, rather than a voluntary contribution or a payment based only on services used within one municipality.



WHAT DOES THE BOARD DO?

The Board is responsible for governance, strategy, financial stewardship and organizational accountability. Board members do not need to be technical experts. They need to be prepared to ask thoughtful questions, consider evidence and professional advice, understand risk and make responsible decisions.

The Board:

- **Establishes strategic direction and priorities;**
- **Approves the budget and monitors financial performance;**
- **Determines the municipal levy within the applicable legislative framework;**
- **Approves major capital plans and organizational policies;**
- **Oversees performance, risk and public accountability;**
- **Hires, supports and evaluates the Chief Administrative Officer;**
- **Supports partnerships and district-wide solutions; and**
- **Advocates collectively to provincial and federal governments.**

Board members help decide how the DRRSB will respond to changing community needs, protect essential services, manage major public assets and position the district for future investment.



The Role of Municipal Representatives

Municipal representatives bring their communities' perspectives to the Board and help connect their councils to the work of the DRRSB.

Effective representatives:

- Keep their councils informed about major priorities and decisions;
- Bring local needs, plans and opportunities to Board discussions;
- Encourage early communication between municipalities and the DRRSB;
- Communicate accurate information about the DRRSB's mandate and decisions;
- Identify opportunities for municipal partnership;
- Support joint advocacy where interests align; and
- Consider the interests of the DRRSB and district as a whole when making Board decisions.

This requires both a local and district lens. Communities differ in geography, population, infrastructure, service access and financial capacity. Not every investment will benefit every municipality equally or at the same time. Board members must consider need, statutory obligations, sustainability and district-wide outcomes.

Governance Matters

The Board governs collectively. Individual Board members do not exercise authority over DRRSB operations on their own.

Individual members do not:

- Supervise or direct employees;
- Intervene in individual client, tenant, patient or employment matters;
- Direct day-to-day operations;
- Commit the DRRSB to a position or expenditure without Board authority; or
- Use confidential information for municipal or political purposes.

Under the direction of the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), administration manages employees, operations, individual service matters and program delivery; provides professional advice; implements Board decisions; and reports to the Board on results and risks.

WHY CONSIDER SERVING?

Serving on the DRRSB Board provides an opportunity to influence services and investments that affect community viability, public safety and the district economy.

Board members help shape the future of:

- **Housing and homelessness prevention;**
- **Child care and EarlyON services;**
- **Ontario Works and employment supports;**
- **Emergency medical response and community paramedicine;**
- **Major public assets and capital investments;**
- **Municipal, provincial and federal funding priorities; and**
- **District partnerships and advocacy.**

What Is the Time Commitment?

Board service generally includes:

- **Approximately ten regular Board meetings each year;**
- **Preparation and review of Board material;**
- **Committee meetings, if appointed and as required;**
- **Occasional strategic planning; and**
- **Municipal liaison, partnership or advocacy activities.**

Members receive reports, background information and professional advice to support informed decision-making. Virtual or hybrid participation is available in accordance with DRRSB meeting practices.

What Do Board Members Gain?

District Perspective: A deeper understanding of communities, needs and opportunities across the District.

Influence: A direct role in decisions about essential services and significant public investments.

Governance Experience: Experience with budgets, capital planning, legislation, risk, strategy and complex public policy.

Partnerships: Opportunities to work with municipal, Indigenous, provincial, health, housing and community partners.

Advocacy: A stronger platform from which to advance practical northern and rural solutions.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Is the DRRSB part of my municipality?

No. The DRRSB is a separate corporation established under provincial legislation and governed by its Board. Municipalities remain important governance, funding and service partners.

Is the DRRSB simply an administrator of provincial programs?

No. While the Province establishes legislation, program requirements and much of the funding framework, the DRRSB makes important local decisions about budgets, service models, partnerships, assets, capital priorities, planning, advocacy and organizational risk.

Does the Province fund everything?

No. Funding arrangements differ by program. Some services are largely or fully provincially funded, while others require municipal contributions or other revenues.

Does the DRRSB have sole responsibility for housing and homelessness prevention?

No. The DRRSB has significant statutory service-manager and planning responsibilities, but many of the decisions and resources required to create housing and prevent homelessness rest with other governments and community partners.

Does municipal partnership always mean municipal money?

No. Contributions can include land, infrastructure coordination, planning support, local data, expertise, in-kind assistance, resolutions of support and joint advocacy. Some projects may warrant financial participation, based on local capacity, benefits, risks and available alternatives.

Do I need technical expertise?

No. Members need curiosity, sound judgment and a willingness to read the material, ask questions, consider evidence and understand their governance responsibilities.

Will I still represent my municipality?

Yes. Local knowledge and perspective are important. At the Board table, members must also consider the DRRSB's district-wide mandate, the interests of the corporation and the sustainability of services across the district.

Bring Your Community's Voice to the District Table

The next DRRSB Board will make important decisions about housing, homelessness prevention, child care, Ontario Works, paramedic services, public assets, workforce capacity and long-term financial sustainability.

Meeting these challenges requires informed municipal representatives who are prepared to understand the DRRSB's mandate, ask difficult questions, weigh evidence, communicate accurately, build partnerships and advocate effectively for the district.

Serving on the DRRSB Board is an opportunity to move beyond identifying problems and help build practical, collaborative solutions for the Rainy River District.

Interested in Serving?

Speak with your municipal council and clerk about the appointment process and the opportunity to represent your community on the DRRSB Board.

Strong district services depend on informed, engaged municipal leadership.

DISTRICT OF RAINY RIVER
SERVICES BOARD

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