

**Social Services
Appeal Board**

**Annual Report
2020-2021**



The Social Services Appeal Board Annual Report for the year 2020/21 can be obtained at the Appeal Board's offices at 7th floor-175 Hargrave Street, Winnipeg MB R3C 3R8; telephone 204-945-3003 or online at http://www.gov.mb.ca/fs/ssab/annual_reports.html.

This publication is available in alternate formats upon request.

Please contact Accessibility Coordinator, Anna Adamiec at 204-945-4785 or by e-mail at anna.adamiec@gov.mb.ca.



MINISTER OF FAMILIES

Room 357
Legislative Building
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 0V8
CANADA

September 2021

Her Honour the Honourable Janice C. Filmon, C.M., O.M.
Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba
Room 235, Legislative Building
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3C 0V8

May It Please Your Honour:

I have the pleasure of presenting the annual report of the Social Services Appeal Board for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2021.

Respectfully submitted,

Original signed by

Honourable Rochelle Squires
Minister of Families





Families

Social Services Appeal Board
7th Floor – 175 Hargrave Street
Winnipeg, MB, Canada R3C 3R8
T 204-945-3003 F 204-945-1736
www.manitoba.ca

Commission d'appel des services sociaux
175 rue Hargrave, 7^e étage
Winnipeg (MB) R3C 3R8
Tél. : 204 945-3003 Téléc. : 204 945-1736
www.manitoba.ca

September 2021

Honourable Rochelle Squires
Minister of Families
Room 357 Legislative Building
Winnipeg MB R3C 0V8

Dear Minister Squires:

I am pleased to submit the annual report of the Social Services Appeal Board for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2021.

Section 26 of The Social Services Appeal Board Act states that within six months after the end of the government's fiscal year, the appeal board must provide the Minister with a report about the board's activities during that fiscal year.

The board is proud of its continued efforts to provide a fair and impartial appeal process to Manitoba citizens as well as informing and offering recommendations to the Minister related to matters arising from appeal hearings.

Sincerely,

Original signed by

James C. McCrae
Chairperson



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Board Membership	Page 8
Board Biographies	Page 9
Jurisdiction of the Social Services Appeal Board	Page 14
The Appeal and Hearing Process	Page 17
Financial Information	Page 18
Appeal Activity	Page 19
Requests for Reconsideration	Page 31
Summary of Advisory Activities	Page 32
The Social Services Appeal Board Act	Page 34

BOARD MEMBERSHIP

The Social Services Appeal Board (SSAB) consists of 15 members who are appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council. Members must represent the social, economic, and cultural diversity of the province. They must also exhibit knowledge of the social programs and services that have the right of appeal to the SSAB. Members cannot be employees of a minister responsible for an act in which the right of appeal is granted. Each member is appointed for a term of up to two years and may be reappointed for two additional two-year terms.

Staff that support the activities of the board are employed by the Department of Families.

Appeal Board Appointees during the 2020-2021 fiscal year:

Chairperson:	James C. McCrae
Vice-chair:	Carmanne Berry
Members:	Teresa Banman Viola Davidson Taranjit Dhaliwal Jason Guy Glesby Rajinder Grewal Dolores Hardy Prof. Israel Kabashiki Shirley Kalyniuk Sandra Kaufmann Edna Nabess Amanda Racine Treena Ross Thomasina Sinclair

Social Services Appeal Board Staff:

Gord Greasley, Director
Tom Ponech, Hearing Officer
Colleen Wichers, Office Manager (effective: March 22, 2021)
Amanda Nguyen, Administrative Assistant
Gayle Mager, Office Manager (April 1, 2020 to December 31, 2020)

Legal Counsel:	Sarah Thomson, Thompson, Dorfman, Sweatman Megan Smith, Thompson, Dorfman, Sweatman
-----------------------	--

BOARD BIOGRAPHIES – 2020-2021

James C. McCrae, Chairperson **Re-Appointed August 7, 2019**

The career of board chair James McCrae of Brandon spans many years within all levels of government. He has served as a City Councillor for the City of Brandon and as the MLA for Brandon West from 1986 to 1999. He served Manitoba in numerous ministerial capacities, including Attorney General, Health, Environment and Education. A former Canadian citizenship judge, James has also been involved with numerous boards, committees and charitable organizations.

Carmanne Berry **Re-Appointed August 11, 2020**

Anne worked for Child Care Subsidy in the Province for many years. Prior to that she worked in the banking community around Manitoba, including Winnipeg and northern communities. These skills have aided in her decision-making on both moral and financial issues on the Appeal Board.

Teresa Banman **Re-Appointed August 7, 2019**

Teresa was a career civil servant with the Province of Manitoba, recently retiring with over 33 years of service. She graduated from the University of Winnipeg with a degree in Urban Studies, and has always been an active volunteer who strongly believes in applying her experience to strengthen and grow her communities.

Teresa has been Chairperson on various associations in the provincial educational system, has participated with numerous charitable organizations throughout southeastern Manitoba, and over the years, has managed various sports teams in the Steinbach area.

Additionally, as a passionate believer in the inspirational properties of people participating in the arts, she has volunteered for several years with the Board of Directors of the Steinbach Arts Council.

For the past 26 years, Teresa has been extremely proud of devoting herself to assisting Manitobans in receiving fair and equitable treatment while they have been dealing with mental health challenges. She fundamentally believes that each person has a life story that is worthy of being heard and respected.

Viola Davidson

Re-Appointed August 11, 2020

Viola is a practising Registered Psychiatric Nurse, with a varied job spectrum in mental health spanning 50 years. She has worked in institutions, hospitals and the community, providing assessments, education, referrals, treatment and counselling for consumers and families. At various stages in her career, she specialized in acute and chronic care, learning disabilities, substance use disorders, schizophrenia, personality disorders, and crisis interventions. She is currently a nurse on the Crisis Stabilization Unit team. As well, she served on the Clubhouse Board.

Taranjit Dhaliwal

Re-Appointed August 7, 2019

Taranjit is currently a student in the Faculty of Science at the University of Manitoba. She has worked with a Manitoba hospital and its board members on a project regarding cleanliness. She volunteers her time at several social services and health agencies.

Jason Guy Glesby

Re-Appointed August 11, 2020

Jason is the owner of Guy's Landscaping and also owned Guy's Place, a garden center in Winnipeg. Jason was also a City of Winnipeg Transit driver and became a railway conductor. Jason is an active member with the motion picture industry union. Jason also volunteers for Neighbor Clean. Jason is involved with preserving vintage Airstream travel trailers and trains, and travels and camps around Manitoba and surrounding areas. Jason also volunteers with the Christmas Cheer Board.

Rajinder Grewal

Re-Appointed August 7, 2019

Rajinder is president of Trade Mark Properties in Winnipeg. His volunteer experience includes serving as fundraising chair of the Punjab Cultural Centre and as president of the Sikh Society of Manitoba and vice-president of the Winnipeg South Sikh Centre. Grewal is fluent in English, Hindi, Punjabi and Urdu.

Dolores Hardy

Re-Appointed August 7, 2019

Dolores is a retired teacher/guidance counselor who has supported and worked for the Brandon School Division for many years. Since her retirement, Dolores has worked as a Faculty Supervisor for student teachers at Brandon University. Dolores also volunteers at her former school on a casual basis. She believes in helping educators who are striving to maintain an enriched learning environment in their school communities.

Professor Israel Kabashiki

Re-Appointed August 7, 2019

Prof. Israel R. Kabashiki is an educator, public servant, public policy consultant, business strategist, business technologist, and scholar-practitioner. He has attended colleges and universities in his native Democratic Republic of the Congo, Canada, and the United States. He holds a PhD in Public Policy and Administration; he holds a second doctorate—a Doctor of Management. His fields of expertise include information systems, economics, international business, management, and public policy and administration.

As an entrepreneur, he is the president and founder of two firms: IZ New Consulting and Mobile Academy of Management.

Prof. Kabashiki has volunteered with various organizations including the International Leadership Association, the City of Winnipeg, the Winnipeg Art Gallery, the Manitoba Service Excellence Awards Leadership Sub-Committee and the Policy Developer's Network Committee.

His professional memberships include: American Society for Public Administration, International Honor Society for Public Affairs and Administration, International Honor Society in Business Administration, Golden Key International Honour Society, International Leadership Association, and National Postdoctoral Association. His interests include professorship, scholarship, consulting, coaching, mentoring, and politics.

Shirley Kalyniuk

Re-Appointed August 7, 2019

Shirley has set an example by encouraging women to break barriers and become involved in the democratic process. She was the first woman municipal politician in the Town of Rosburn, elected in 1983. She was later elected the first woman mayor, a position she held until 2014. Shirley is the recipient of many honours such as the Rural Economic Leadership Award, the Queen Elizabeth Golden Jubilee medal and the Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee medal. In 2014, she retired from municipal politics after 31 years. One of Shirley's lasting legacies is her work to promote women's involvement in municipal government. In 2015, she was the recipient of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' prestigious Ann MacLean Award for Outstanding Service by a Woman in Municipal Politics. Shirley volunteers on 6 local boards acting as Chair or Secretary and has been the Rosburn Terry Fox Run organizer for this, the 40th year.

Sandra Kaufmann**Re-Appointed August 11, 2020**

Sandra is a retired retired bookkeeper/office manager.. Her most recent position was with Cassidy Ramsay Barristers and Solicitors, but also spent time at Corne and Corne Barrister and Solicitors. Sandra spent numerous years bookkeeping for the family business and owning and operating her own business A Cut Above Hair Fashions in Winnipeg. In 1975 she got involved in all levels of elections and has continued to be involved. Sandra and her partner, Peter, have two children and three granddaughters. Sandra hails from Souris, Manitoba and has fond memories of life on a farm.

Edna Nabess**Re-Appointed August 7, 2019**

Edna was born and raised in Cormorant, Manitoba. She is a proud member of the Mathias Colomb Cree Nation, who was taught the traditions of her Cree culture by her mother. Edna is the founder and principal designer of Cree-Ations, and an artisan known for her one-of-a-kind designs. She is a founding member of the Manitoba Artist Showcase. Edna received the Aboriginal Business Service Network Award in 2009, the BMO Expansion and Growth in Small Business Award in 2017, and a Canada 150 Medal. In addition to the Winnipeg Police Board, Edna serves on the boards of Efficiency Manitoba, Manitoba Public Insurance, Manitoba 150 Celebration Committee, and ATELAC, and was a candidate in the 2016 provincial election in the riding of Kewatinook. Edna gives back to the community by participating in multiple charitable events and fundraising activities.

Amanda Racine**Re-Appointed August 7, 2019**

Amanda is originally from Winnipeg and studied pharmacy at Winnipeg Technical College and is a former pharmacy technician. Racine currently works as a hairdresser. She is also very active in the Boissevain community, where she volunteers with St. Andrews Community Church.

Treena Ross**Re-Appointed August 11, 2020**

Treena has worked in the information technology, accounting and business sectors. She brings entrepreneurial experience with her online marketing and promotional company. She has coordinated volunteers in a variety of areas such as nonprofit and fundraising. She is an active advocate for persons with disabilities by providing information about provincial and federal programs, and attending appointments to help clients to remain in their communities with appropriate supports. By supporting community members, she is able to make a difference and propose changes to different levels of government to help support better policies and programs.

Thomasina is a member of the Opaskwayak Cree Nation. She works as a Child Development Worker for Jordan's Principle for the Opaskwayak Health Authority. As a Child Development Worker, she works with the Speech and Language Pathologist to make sure that all client needs are met. She also works with the Occupational Therapist, making appointments and meeting with families.

Thomasina is a mother of two daughters and happily married to her husband of 12 years. She plans on working on her education and becoming a Speech and Language Pathologist in the fall of 2020.

JURISDICTION OF THE SOCIAL SERVICES APPEAL BOARD

The Social Services Appeal Board (SSAB) is the independent appeal body for the majority of programs and services provided by the Department of Families. The board reports directly to the Minister of Families.

The SSAB was first established in 1959 by The Department of Welfare Act. In 1974, that act was repealed and the SSAB continued under the provisions within The Social Services Administration Act. On February 18, 2002, The Social Services Appeal Board Act was proclaimed.

Under The Social Services Appeal Board Act, the SSAB has the ability to determine its own administrative policies and procedures. The board's decisions cannot be overturned by the minister's office. Only the board, through a reconsideration of its decision, or the Court of Appeal, may overturn a decision.

There are several different decisions that can be appealed. These are summarized below:

Adoption Agency Licensing

Under Section 9 of The Adoption Act, an individual may file an appeal with the SSAB if the director refuses to issue a licence for an adoption agency. An individual may also file an appeal if a licence that was previously issued has been suspended, cancelled or not renewed.

Child Care Facility Licensing

A person who is refused a licence for the operation of a child care facility other than a foster home or whose licence is suspended, cancelled or refused renewal may appeal this decision to the SSAB under Section 8(5) of The Child and Family Services Act.

Child Care Licensing and Subsidies

Section 20 of The Community Child Care Standards Act allows the SSAB to hear appeals on the following four issues:

- the refusal to issue a licence to a child care facility
- the suspension or revocation of a child care facility licence
- the imposition of terms or conditions on a child care facility licence
- the denial or amount of a child care subsidy

Child Care Qualifications Certification

Section 30 of The Community Care Standards Act allows a person to appeal when they do not agree with the Director's decision regarding their application for a child care certificate.

Financial Assistance Programs

Employment and Income Assistance Program AND Rent Assist

Subsection 9(3) of The Manitoba Assistance Act gives an individual the right to appeal to the SSAB for the following reasons:

- a. he or she was not allowed to apply or re-apply for income assistance or general assistance or shelter assistance
- b. his or her request for income assistance, general assistance or shelter assistance or for an increase in income assistance, general assistance or shelter assistance was not decided upon within a reasonable time
- c. his or her application for income assistance, general assistance, or shelter assistance was denied
- d. his or her income assistance, general assistance or shelter assistance was cancelled, suspended, varied or withheld
- e. the amount of income assistance, general assistance or shelter assistance granted is insufficient to meet his or her needs

55 PLUS Junior Component

The Junior Component of the 55 PLUS Program provides applicants with the right to appeal to the SSAB if an applicant is told that they are not eligible to receive benefits under the 55 PLUS Program. An appeal may also be filed if an individual disagrees with the level of benefits that they are receiving under the program. The right to appeal for these reasons is granted under Section 9 of the Income Supplement for Persons Not Eligible for Old Age Security Benefits (55 PLUS) regulation of The Social Services Administration Act.

Manitoba Prenatal Benefit

If an individual disagrees with the assessment or re-assessment of their Manitoba Prenatal Benefit, the individual can appeal the decision under Section 12 of the Manitoba Prenatal Benefit regulation under The Social Services Administration Act.

Residential Care Facility Licensing

A person may appeal to the SSAB the department's decision to deny, suspend or cancel a licence for a residential care facility. An individual may also file an appeal with the SSAB if a letter of approval relating to a residential care facility is cancelled or suspended. The right to appeal these decisions for adult facilities is granted under Section 13 of The Social Services Administration Act.

Employability Assistance for People with Disabilities (Eligibility)

The SSAB hears appeals regarding the Employability Assistance for People with Disabilities. An appeal may be filed if the director refuses an application on the grounds that the applicant does not meet the eligibility criteria for enrolment. The right to appeal this decision is granted under Section 6 of the Vocational Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons regulation under The Social Services Administration Act.

Community Living disABILITY Services (Eligibility and Individual Care Plan)

The SSAB is responsible for hearing appeals regarding The Vulnerable Persons Living with a Mental Disability Act. Section 16 of the act allows individuals to appeal when a person's eligibility for entrance into the program is denied, or there is a dispute concerning an individual's support services plan.

THE APPEAL AND HEARING PROCESS

Appeals are accepted by mail, fax, or in person at the SSAB office. An appeal can be made in the form of a handwritten letter or by filling out the Notice of Appeal form. The appeal must be in writing and submitted within 30 days from the time the appellant receives the decision they are appealing, although the SSAB may extend this time period.

Once an appeal is received, a copy is sent to the respondent (the person who made the decision). The respondent is required to prepare a report outlining why the decision was made, and to include any documented evidence upon which the decision was made.

A copy of the respondent's report and a Notice of Hearing is sent to the appellant. The SSAB is required to hold the hearing within 30 days after the appeal is received, unless the appellant requests a longer time.

The SSAB has the power to summon witnesses if required.

The appellant may bring a person to the appeal to support them or help them present their case, but this is not a requirement.

At the hearing, three members of the SSAB will sit as a panel to hear the appeal. The appellant is required to attend, as is a representative for the relevant program. Each party provides a short presentation and the SSAB may ask any questions they need in order to make their decision. The SSAB's decision is made in private following the hearing. A letter with the SSAB's decision and the reasons for the decision is mailed to the appellant within 15 days.

Decisions made by the SSAB are subject to reconsideration or application for leave to appeal from the Court of Appeal.

More detailed information about the SSAB's Policies and Procedures can be found at: <http://www.gov.mb.ca/fs/ssab/index.html>.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

In 2020-2021, the annual budget for the Social Services Appeal Board was \$463,000 consisting of \$403,000 for staff and board salaries and benefits, and \$60,000 for operating costs. Actual expenditures were \$335,000.

The board members' per diem payments are salary expenses. In 2020-2021, the amount spent on board per diems was \$55,800.

09-3D Social Services Appeal Board

Expenditures by Sub-Appropriation	Actual 2019-2020 \$000	FTE*	Estimate 2019-2020 \$000	Variance Over/(Under)	Expl. No.
Total Salaries and Employee Benefits	272	4.00	403	(131)	1
Total Other Expenditures	63		60	3	
Total Expenditures	335		463	(128)	

* Full time equivalents do not include board positions.

1. Under expenditure due to staff vacancies

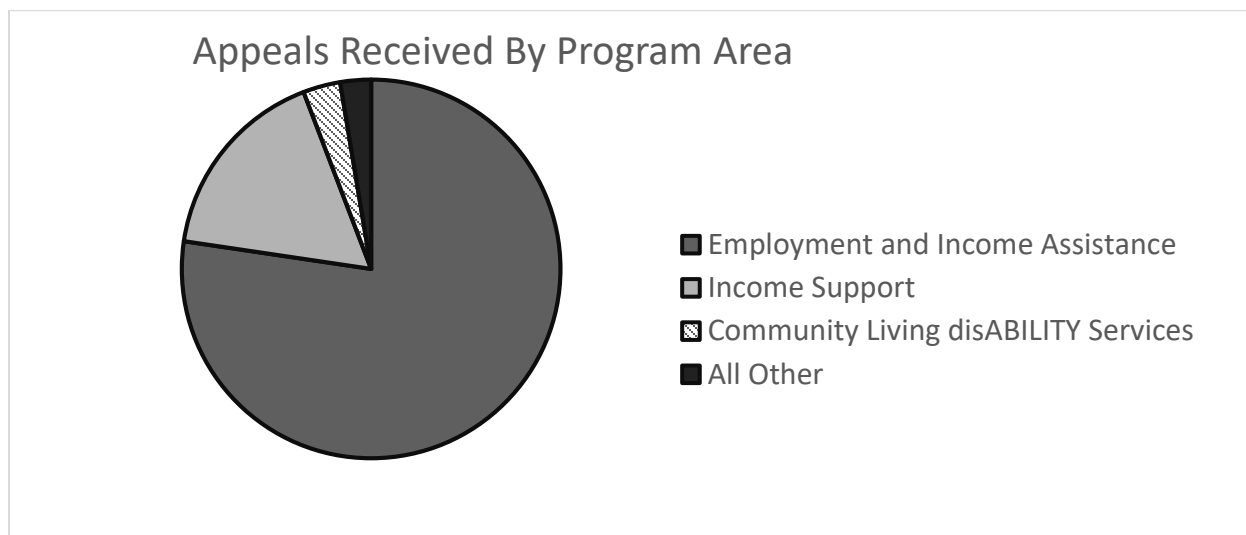
Board members are paid a per diem when they attend hearings, meetings, and training sessions. For a full day, the Chairperson receives \$243.00 and board members receive \$139.00. For a half day, the Chairperson receives \$138.00 and board members receive \$79.00.

APPEAL ACTIVITY

Appeals Received by Program

	2019-2020	2019-2020
TOTAL APPEALS FILED	534	772
Employment and Income Assistance	413	634
Income Support	90	106
- Rent Assist	59	62
- 55 Plus	11	10
- Child Care Subsidy	19	33
- Prenatal Benefit	1	1
Community Living disABILITY Services	17	31
Other	14	1
- Employability Assistance for People with Disabilities	2	0
- Child Care Licensing	2	1
- Child Care Qualifications	7	0
- Residential Care - Child	1	0
- Program Not Defined—out of jurisdiction*	2	0

* Not within the jurisdiction of SSAB (e.g. Employment Insurance)



Appeals Received in 2020-2021 by Disposition

	2020-2021	%*	2019-2020	%*
Allowed	17	3	36	5
Varied	15	3	21	3
Withdrawn Resolved	128	24	180	23
Outcome Favourable to Appellant	160	30	237	31
Dismissed	166	31	227	29
Withdrawn Clarified	26	5	37	5
Outcome Unfavourable to Appellant	192	36	264	34
Outside jurisdiction	67	13	64	8
Withdrawn Abandoned	33	6	101	13
Did Not Appear	28	5	43	6
Referred back	2	0	2	0
Other	0	0	1	0
Process Closures**	130	24	211	27
Still in process	52	10	60	8
TOTAL	534	100	772	100

In 2020-2021, all statistics are reported as of March 31, 2021.

Notes:

- 1 A resolved appeal means that some action was taken by the department to address the concerns raised in the appeal.
- 2 An abandoned appeal means that the Appeal Board was unable to contact the appellant and the appeal was closed.
- 3 A clarified appeal means that an explanation by the department caused the appeal to be withdrawn.
4. "Other" refers to an appeal taken which the Board convened but found no decision.

* Numbers may not add due to rounding

** A file that is closed as withdrawn – abandoned (including did not confirm), did not appear, is referred back to the Department of Families by the SSAB or is deemed out of jurisdiction.

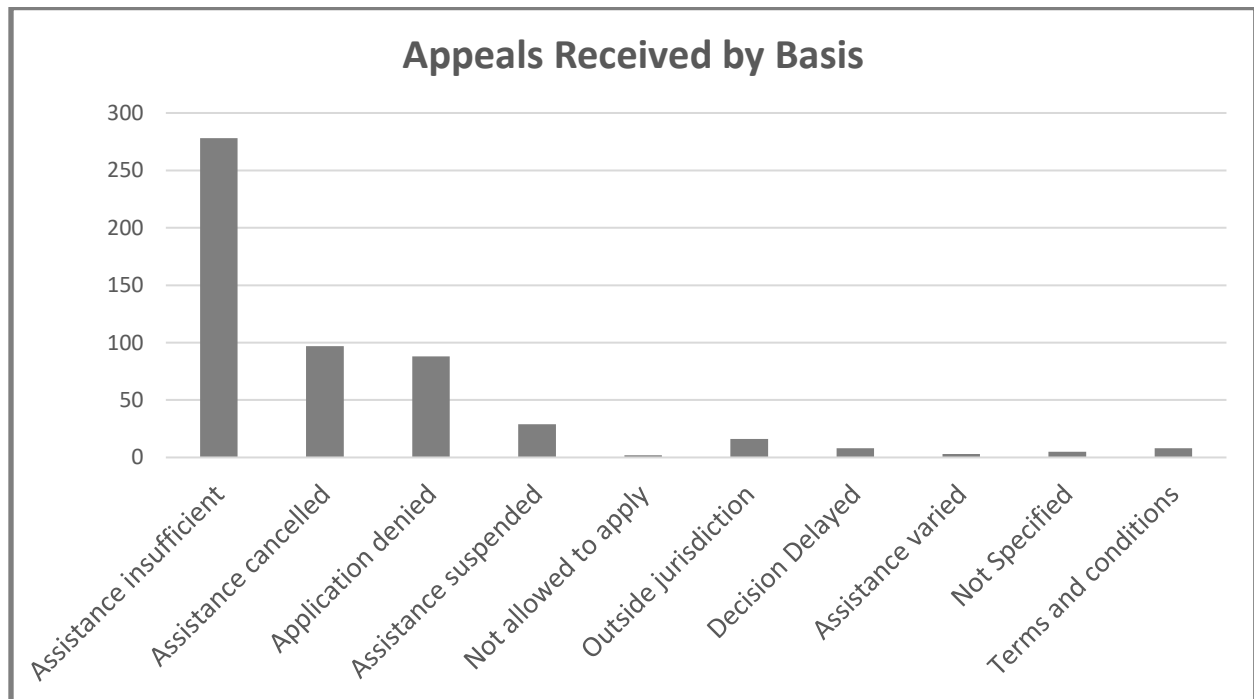
Appeals Closed in 2020-2021, by Year Filed

Year ending March 31	2021	2020	Total
Allowed	17	4	21
Varied	15	2	17
Withdrawn Resolved	128	9	137
Outcome Favourable to Appellant	160	15	175
Dismissed	166	25	191
Withdrawn Clarified	26	0	26
Outcome Unfavourable to Appellant	192	25	217
Outside jurisdiction	67	3	70
Withdrawn Abandoned	33	5	38
Other	0	0	0
Did Not Appear	28	11	39
Referred back	2	1	3
Process Closures	130	20	150
Appeals Closed	482	60	542
Carried to 2021-2022	52	0	52

Appeals Received by Basis

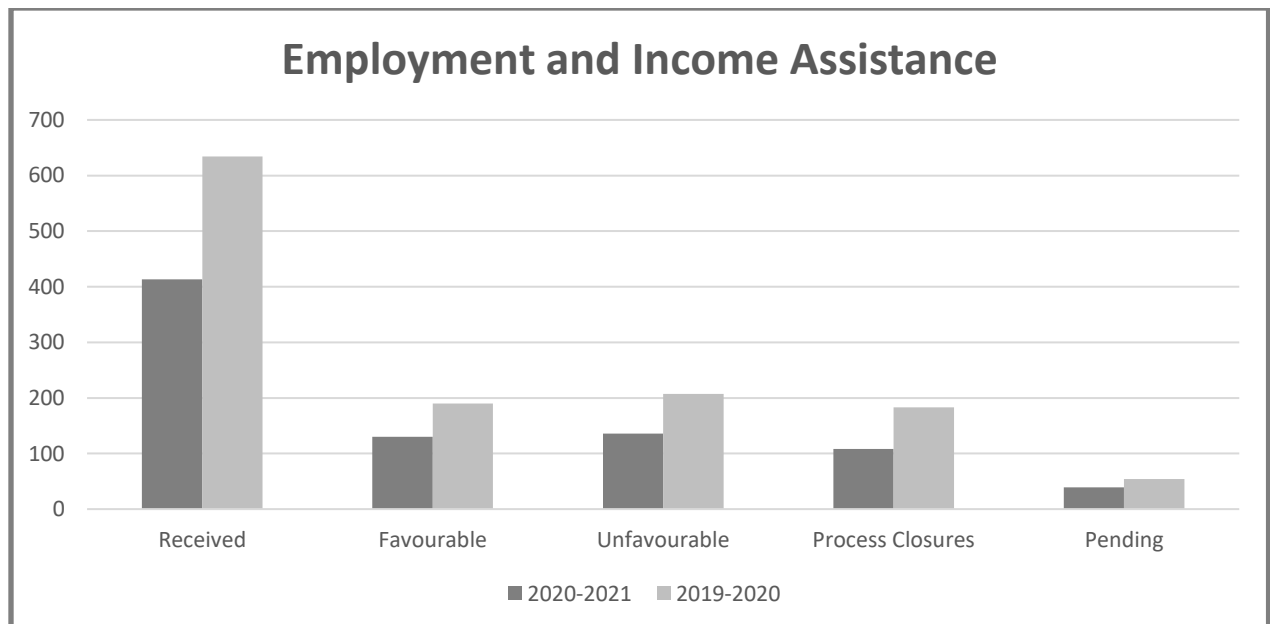
Of the 534 appeals filed during the 2020-2021 fiscal year, the basis of appeal was as follows:

Assistance insufficient	278
Assistance cancelled	97
Application denied	88
Assistance suspended	29
Not allowed to apply	2
Outside jurisdiction	16
Decision delayed	8
Assistance varied	3
Not specified	5
Terms and conditions	8



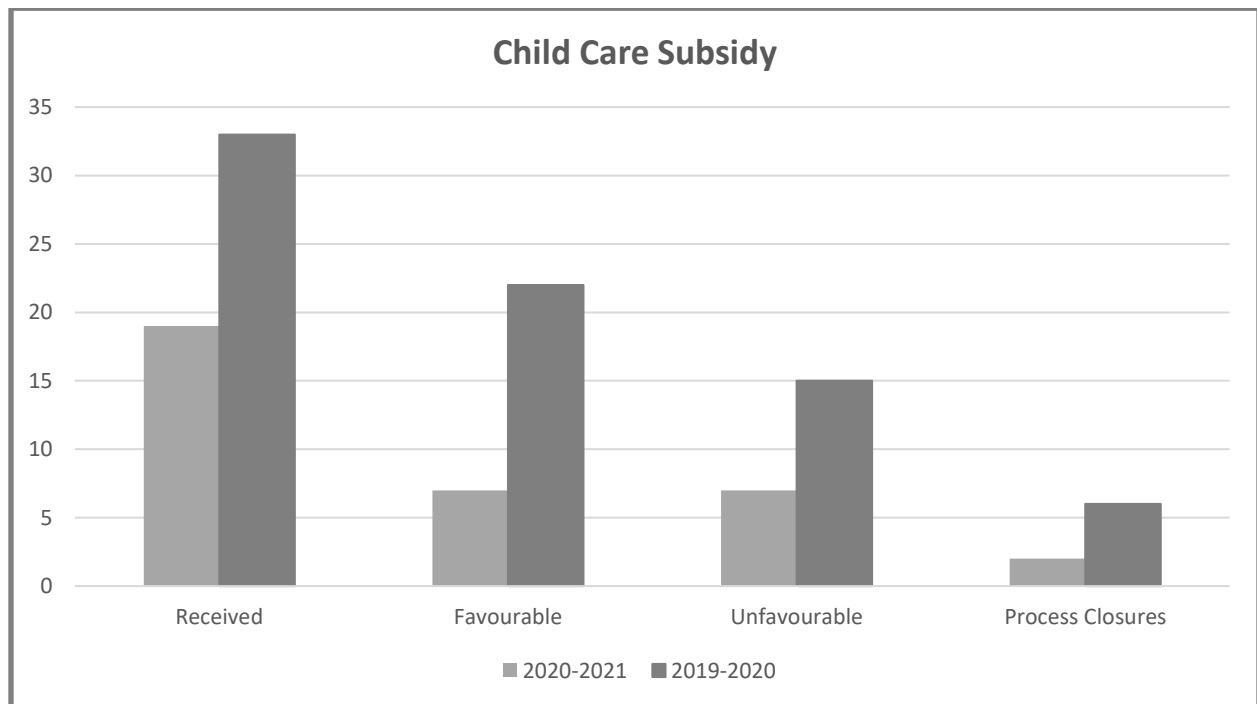
Employment and Income Assistance:

DISPOSITION	2020-2021	2019-2020
Received	413	634
Allowed	10	26
Varied	15	21
Withdrawn Resolved	105	143
Favourable to Appellant	130	190
Dismissed	121	184
Withdrawn Clarified	15	23
Unfavourable to Appellant	136	207
Outside Jurisdiction	59	63
Withdrawn Abandoned	23	82
Other	0	1
Did Not Appear	24	35
Referred Back	2	2
Process Closures	108	183
Pending	39	54



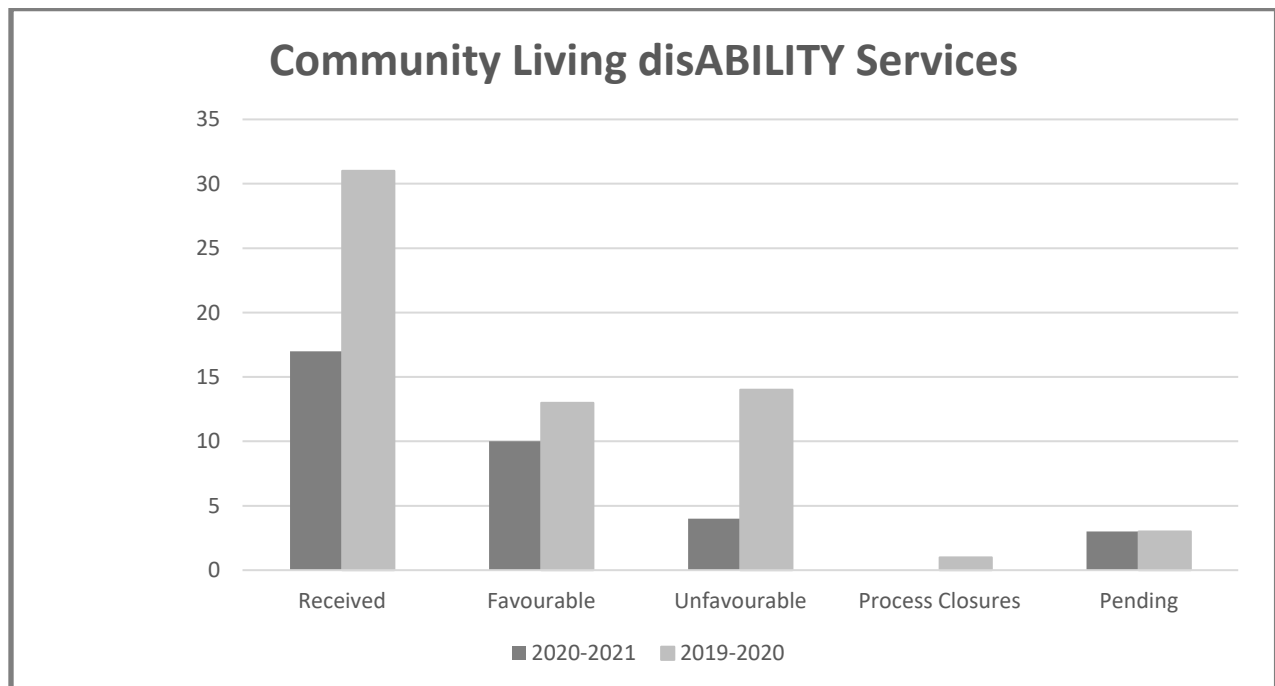
Child Care Subsidy:

DISPOSITION	2020-2021	2019-2020
Received	19	33
Allowed	0	0
Varied	0	0
Withdrawn Resolved	7	11
Favourable to Appellant	7	11
Dismissed	6	9
Withdrawn Clarified	1	6
Unfavourable to Appellant	7	15
Withdrawn Abandoned	2	3
Did Not Appear	0	3
Process Closures	2	6
Pending	3	1



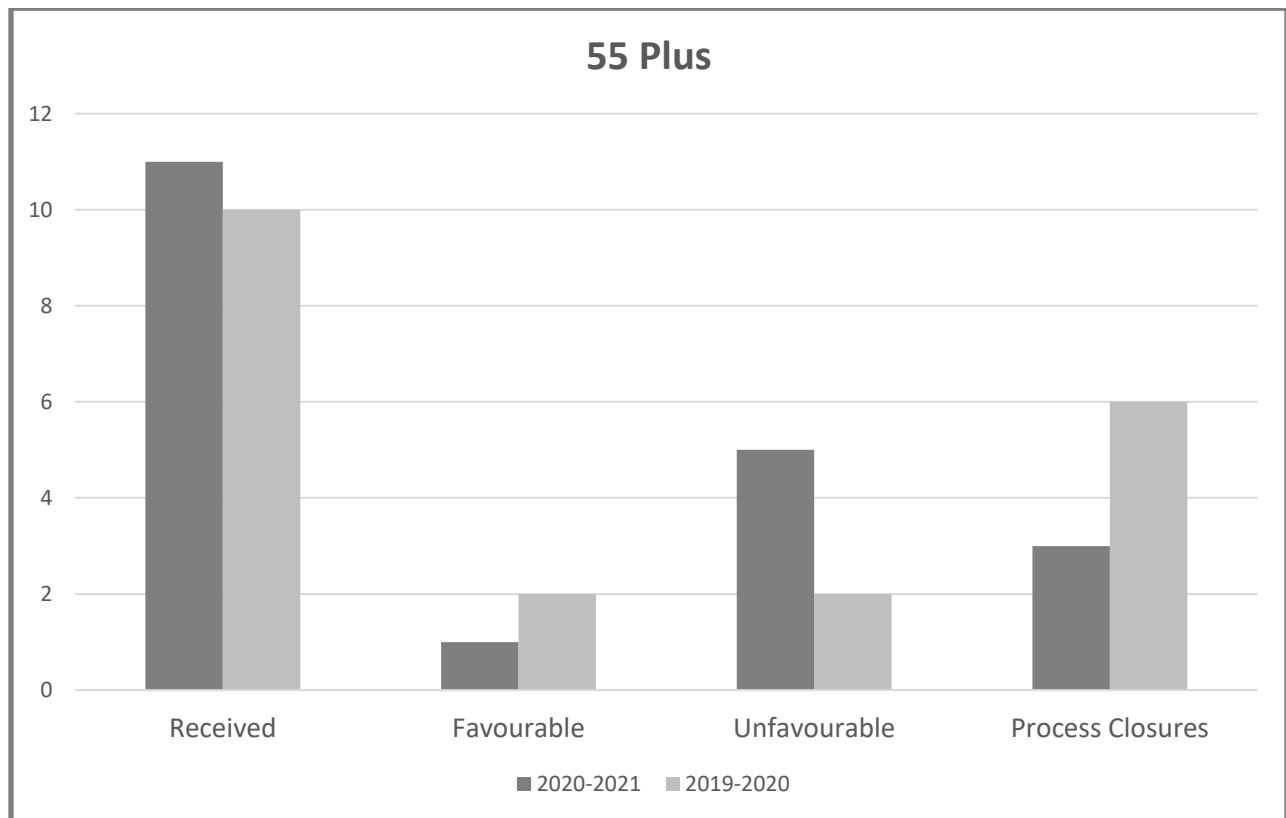
Community Living disABILITY Services:

DISPOSITION	2020-2021	2019-2020
Received	17	31
Allowed	7	8
Withdrawn Resolved	3	5
Favourable to Appellant	10	13
Dismissed	3	12
Withdrawn Clarified	1	2
Unfavourable to Appellant	4	14
Withdrawn Abandoned	0	0
Outside Jurisdiction	0	1
Process Closures	0	1
Pending	3	3



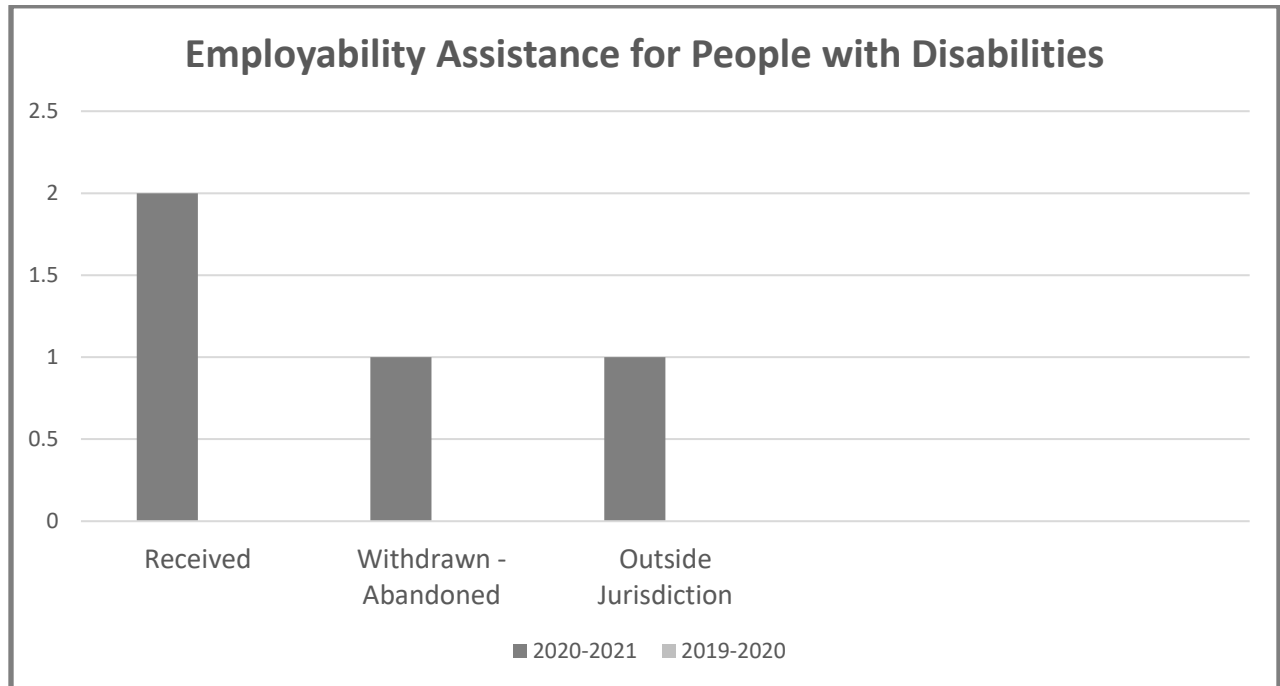
55 Plus:

DISPOSITION	2020-2021	2019-2020
Received	11	10
Allowed	0	0
Withdrawn Resolved	1	2
Favourable to Appellant	1	2
Dismissed	5	2
Withdrawn Clarified	0	0
Unfavourable to Appellant	5	2
Withdrawn Abandoned	1	5
Did Not Appear	1	1
Outside Jurisdiction	1	0
Process Closures	3	6
Pending	2	



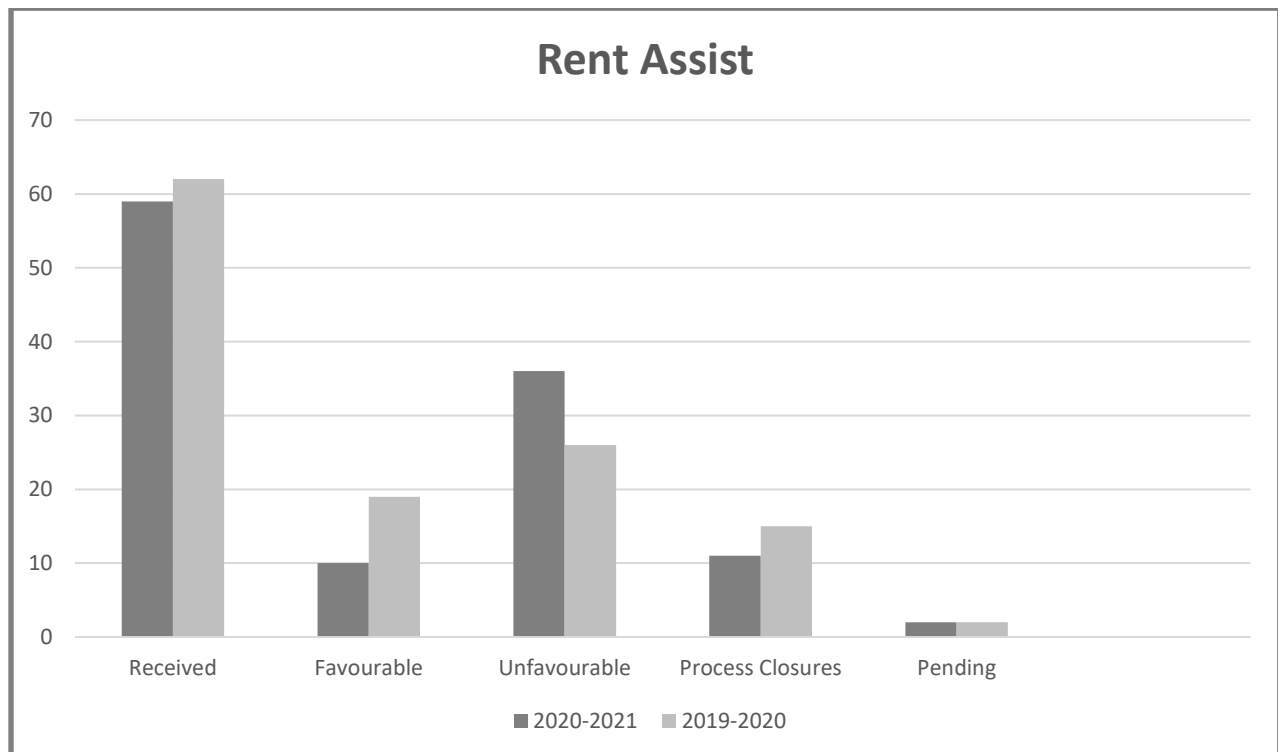
Employability Assistance for People with Disabilities:

DISPOSITION	2020-2021	2019-2020
Received	2	0
Withdrawn - Abandoned	1	0
Outside Jurisdiction	1	0



Rent Assist:

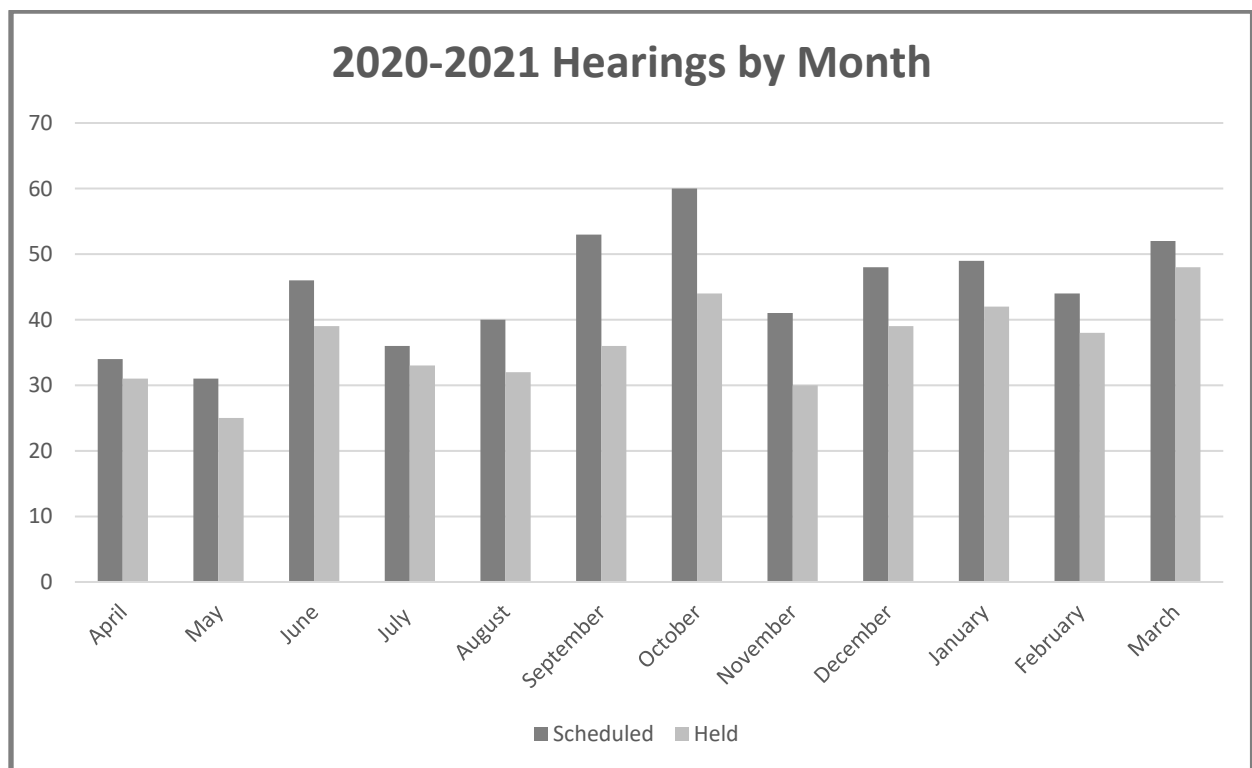
DISPOSITION	2020-2021	2019-2020
Received	59	62
Allowed	0	2
Withdrawn Resolved	10	17
Favourable to Appellant	10	19
Dismissed	28	20
Withdrawn Clarified	8	6
Unfavourable to Appellant	36	26
Did Not Appear	3	4
Withdrawn Abandoned	5	11
Outside Jurisdiction	3	0
Process Closures	11	15
Pending	2	2



2020-2021 Hearings By Month

	Winnipeg	Rural	Teleconference	Cancelled
April	0		31	13
May	0		25	4
June	4		35	4
July	0		33	5
August	4		28	1
September	0		36	10
October	2		42	6
November	0		30	7
December	1		38	2
January	2		40	1
February	0		38	3
March	1		47	6
Totals*	14		423	62

* Includes appeals filed in prior years



Reasons for Appeal

Of the 534 appeals received by the SSAB in 2020-2021, the reasons for filing appeals were as follows:

Medical eligibility	104
Basic needs	24
Health needs	36
Overpayments	31
Financial resources	67
Shelter costs	36
Sanctions	7
Special needs	6
Common-law union	14
All other where reason is defined	83
Reason undefined*	126

* Programs where SSAB reviews eligibility only, or where the appeal was closed because it was a duplicate appeal, had no appealable issue or was out of jurisdiction.

REQUESTS FOR RECONSIDERATION

According to The Social Services Appeal Board Act, either party to the appeal may request a Reconsideration of the Appeal Board's decision.

A Reconsideration Request must be filed in writing within 30 days of the decision of the SSAB and asks the SSAB to consider the following issues:

- if the original panel or decision was, or was perceived to be biased
- if the panel process inhibited the presentation or consideration of relevant evidence
- if the decision was inconsistent with the legislation
- if an obvious administrative error in calculation or relevant dates occurred in the Board's Order.

REQUESTS RECEIVED

	2020-2021	2019-2020
Total	16	20
From appellant	14	15
From respondent	2	5

PROGRAM BREAKDOWN

	2020-2021	2019-2020
Employment and Income Assistance	13	17
Community Living DisAbility Services	0	2
Employability Assistance for People with Disabilities	0	0
Rent Assist	3	1

DISPOSITION

	2020-2021	2019-2020
Requests granted	0	1
Requests denied	16	18
Withdrawn	0	1

OF THE REQUESTS GRANTED

	2020-2021	2019-2020
Decision varied	0	0
Decision overturned	0	1
Decision upheld	16	0

SUMMARY OF ADVISORY ACTIVITIES

Under The Social Services Appeal Board Act, the SSAB has the responsibility to advise and make recommendations about matters that relate to the designated social services. The Board as a whole met once with the Minister of Families during the 2020-2021 fiscal year. The Board Chair also met once with the Minister.

The Board raised three issues with the Minister.

Each year, the Board hears a number of appeals of Department decisions to categorize relationships as common-law unions. The Board has expressed concern in the past that the Department's policy on determining whether a common-law union exists is overly broad, and captures relationships that are not typically considered to be common-law by ordinary citizens.

However, in cases where the Board determines the policy is overly broad, it must rely on the wording of the Manitoba Assistance Act, which refers to a conjugal relationship rather than a common-law relationship.

The Board is concerned that the term "conjugal relationship" lacks clarity, and may require the Board to ask for evidence that infringes on a person's privacy rights. Recent Supreme Court of Canada rulings further complicate the Board's analysis. The Board recommended that the Department review the term to determine whether more clarity can be provided to Department staff, clients and the Board when determining common-law relationships.

The second issue concerns the Department's policy denial of funding for any outpatient physiotherapy service. The Board understands the policy was developed when hospitals provided those services. The policy has not been changed since outpatient hospital physiotherapy ended a number of years ago, despite the fact The Manitoba Assistance Act Regulation authorizes the Department to fund physiotherapy services.

This distinction between the Regulation and the Department's policy has caused confusion with program clients. The Board's stance in physiotherapy appeals has been to follow the policy except in exceptional circumstances. Most commonly, the Board grants physiotherapy funding if the evidence demonstrates that physiotherapy may eliminate the need for assistance by preparing the person for a return to work.

The Board recommended that the Department revise its physiotherapy policy to allow for funding in exceptional circumstances, such as when the physiotherapy will increase the independence of clients and reduce future program expenditures.

The third issue concerns the lack of flexibility in the Manitoba Assistance Act Regulation to accommodate changes in financial circumstances for applicants to the Rent Assist program.

Eligibility for the Rent Assist program is based on income in the prior year. The Regulation specifically disallows adjustments for changes in financial circumstances. The Board frequently hears appeals from people who have lost their jobs or suffered other income declines, but who do not qualify for Rent Assist because of their income in the previous year.

The Board understands that the use of the tax system is an efficient way to administer the program. However, the Board recommended that the Regulation be amended to permit significant changes in financial circumstances to be considered when determining the Rent Assist subsidy.

The Minister has responded to the issues raised by the Board, and it is encouraged by the steps the Department is taking on these issues.

For a number of years, the Board has acted in its advisory role to the Minister of Families by raising concerns about the gap in services to adults who do not fit the criteria for the Community Living DisAbility Services program but have extremely diminished ability to function on their own. The Board understands that the Department is reviewing aspects of the program, including its governing Act, and looks forward to the results of that review.

The Social Services Appeal Board Act

(Assented to July 6, 2001)

HER MAJESTY, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, enacts as follows:

DEFINITIONS AND PURPOSE

Definitions

1 In this Act,

"appeal board" means the Social Services Appeal Board referred to in section 3; (« Commission d'appel »)

"designated Act" means

- (a) *The Adoption Act*,
- (b) *The Community Child Care Standards Act*,
- (c) *The Employment and Income Assistance Act*,
- (d) *The Social Services Administration Act* or a regulation under that Act,
- (e) *The Vulnerable Persons Living with a Mental Disability Act*,
- (f) any other Act or regulation designated as a designated Act in the regulations; (« loi désignée »)

"designated officer" means a person who has authority under a designated Act to make a decision or order for which there is a right of appeal under the designated Act to the appeal board, or the person to whom that authority is delegated; (« fonctionnaire désigné »)

"minister" means the minister appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council to administer this Act; (« ministre »)

"panel" means a panel of the appeal board. (« comité »)

Purpose

2 The purpose of this Act is to give Manitobans a fair, impartial and informal appeal process from decisions relating to various social services and programs.

APPEAL BOARD

Social Services Appeal Board

3 The Social Services Advisory Committee, which was established under *The Social Services Administration Act*, is continued under this Act as the Social Services Appeal Board.

Members

4(1) The appeal board is to consist of 15 members appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council.

Who can be a member

4(2) The members of the appeal board must, in the opinion of the Lieutenant Governor in Council,

- (a) be representative of the regional, economic and cultural diversity of Manitoba;
- (b) be knowledgeable about social services and programs under designated Acts; and
- (c) not be employees under the control of a minister responsible for a designated Act.

Two-year terms

4(3) Each member is to be appointed for a term of up to two years and, subject to subsection (4), may be re-appointed.

Reappointing a member

4(4) A member who has served for six years in consecutive terms may be re-appointed for a further term, but only if at least one year has passed since the end of his or her last term.

Member continues to hold office

4(5) A member continues to hold office until he or she is reappointed, a successor is appointed or the appointment is revoked.

Remuneration and expenses

5 The members of the appeal board are to be paid remuneration and expenses at rates set by the Lieutenant Governor in Council.

Chair and vice-chair

6(1) The Lieutenant Governor in Council must designate one of the members of the appeal board as chair and one or more members as vice-chairs.

Duties of vice-chair

6(2) A vice-chair has the authority of the chair if the chair is absent or unable to act, or when authorized by the chair.

Staff

7 Any employees required to enable the appeal board to carry out its responsibilities may be appointed in accordance with *The Civil Service Act*.

Responsibilities of the appeal board

8 The appeal board has these responsibilities:

- (a) to hear and decide appeals under designated Acts;
- (b) at the minister's request, to advise and make recommendations about matters that relate to social services and programs in Manitoba;
- (c) on its own initiative, to advise and make recommendations to the minister about social services provided under the designated Acts;
- (d) to perform any other duties assigned to it by an Act or regulation or by the minister.

No jurisdiction over constitutional questions

8.1 The appeal board does not have jurisdiction

- a) to inquire into or make a decision concerning the constitutional validity or applicability of an Act of the Parliament of Canada or of the Legislature, or of a regulation made under the authority of such an Act; or
- b) to grant a remedy under subsection 24(1) of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

Procedural rules

9 The appeal board may establish its own rules of practice and procedure and must make them available to the public.

Posting information about appeals

10 A designated officer must post information about the right to appeal to the appeal board, and about the appeal process, in a visible public location in any office in which decisions are made that can be appealed under a designated Act.

PANELS OF THE APPEAL BOARD

Board to sit in panels

11(1) The appeal board must sit in panels of three members when hearing appeals.

Assigning members to panels

11(2) The chair is to assign members to sit on panels.

Chair of panel

11(3) The chair or a vice-chair is to preside over a panel, or the chair may designate another member of the appeal board to preside.

Who is not eligible to be a member of a panel

11(4) A member of the appeal board is not eligible to sit on a panel if he or she

- (a) is a relative of a party; or
- (b) is not able to be impartial and independent about the outcome of the appeal.

Quorum

11(5) A quorum for a panel is the three members referred to in subsection (1).

Jurisdiction of panel

11(6) In considering and deciding an appeal,

- (a) a panel has all the jurisdiction of the appeal board and may exercise the board's powers and perform its duties; and
- (b) a decision of a majority of the members of a panel is the decision of the appeal board.

APPEAL TO THE APPEAL BOARD

Filing an appeal

12(1) A person who has a right to appeal a decision or order to the appeal board under a designated Act may commence an appeal by filing a notice of appeal with the board.

Time limit for filing

12(2) A notice of appeal must be filed within 30 days after the date of the decision or order, unless the designated Act specifies a different time limit.

Extending the time limit

12(3) The appeal board may extend the time limit for commencing an appeal, and may do so either before or after the time limit expires.

Reasons

12(4) A notice of appeal must be in writing and must state the reasons for the appeal.

Parties

13(1) The parties to an appeal are the person who has a right to appeal to the appeal board and the designated officer under the designated Act.

Parties to be present

13(2) The appellant and the designated officer or a delegate of the designated officer must be present at the hearing or, if subsection 19(2) applies, must be able to communicate with each other and the appeal board simultaneously.

Advocates

14 At the appellant's request, another person may communicate with the appeal board at any time on the appellant's behalf and may be present with the appellant at the hearing.

Notice to the designated officer

15(1) On receiving a notice of appeal, the appeal board must promptly give a copy of it to the designated officer.

Designated office must forward documents

15(2) On receiving the notice of appeal, the designated officer must promptly give the appeal board

- (a) all of the documentary evidence on which the designated officer made the decision or order being appealed;
- (b) any documents that the designated officer is specifically required to provide to the board under the designated Act; and
- (c) any other documents the designated officer thinks might be relevant to the appeal.

Hearing date

16(1) For each appeal, the appeal board must arrange the earliest possible hearing date. The hearing must not be commenced more than 30 days after the board receives the notice of appeal, unless the board at the request of the appellant, grants an extension.

Notice

16(2) Unless the parties agree to a shorter period of notice, at least six days before the hearing the appeal board must give the parties written notice of the date, time and place of the hearing.

Parties may examine evidence

17 The appeal board must give each party a reasonable opportunity to examine and copy any information that has been submitted to the board for the purpose of the hearing.

Powers and duties of the board

18 The appeal board must inform itself fully of the facts concerning each appeal. For that purpose, the board

- (a) may require the attendance of witnesses and the production of documents in addition to the witnesses called by the parties and the documents produced by the parties; and
- (b) has the powers of a commissioner under Part V of *The Manitoba Evidence Act*.

Hearing process: rules of evidence do not apply

19(1) The appeal board is not bound by the rules of evidence that apply to judicial proceedings.

Hearing by teleconference

19(2) A hearing may be held by means of a conference telephone call, or by another method of communication that permits the appeal board and the parties to communicate with each other simultaneously.

Closed hearing if appellant requests

19(3) The hearing is to be closed to the public if the appellant asks for it to be closed; otherwise it is to be open to the public.

Adjournment

19(4) The appeal board may adjourn a hearing when it considers it appropriate to do so.

ORDER OF THE APPEAL BOARD**Order of the board**

20(1) Unless the designated Act states otherwise, after a hearing the appeal board may, by written order,

- (a) confirm, vary or rescind the order or decision of the designated officer;
- (b) make any order or decision that the designated officer could have made; or
- (c) refer the matter back to the designated officer for further consideration by the designated officer in accordance with any direction of the appeal board.

Reasons

20(2) The appeal board must give written reasons for its order.

Time limit for making order

20(3) The appeal board must make its order within 15 days after the hearing ends.

Order given to the parties

20(4) The appeal board must give the parties a copy of the order and inform them of their right to appeal a question of law or jurisdiction to The Court of Appeal.

Method of giving the order

20(5) The order must be given to the parties personally or by regular lettermail or by another method acceptable to the appeal board and the parties.

Order must be given effect

21 A designated officer must give effect to the order of the appeal board.

Reconsideration of the order

22(1) At the request of a party to the appeal or on its own initiative, the appeal board may reconsider all or part of its order and may confirm, vary, suspend or rescind its order.

Time limit for making request

22(2) A written request for a reconsideration, stating the reasons for the request, must be filed with the appeal board within 30 days after the date of the board's order.

Time limit for deciding request

22(3) The appeal board must, by order, make a decision as to whether an order will be reconsidered, within 15 days after the date the request for a reconsideration is filed.

Reasons

22(4) The board must give written reasons if it decides not to reconsider an order.

APPEAL TO COURT OF APPEAL**Appeal to Court of Appeal**

23(1) Any party to the appeal before the appeal board may appeal the board's order to The Court of Appeal on any question involving the board's jurisdiction or on a point of law, but only after obtaining leave to appeal from a judge of The Court of Appeal.

Time limit

23(2) An application for leave to appeal must be made within 30 days after the date of the appeal board's order, or within any further time that a judge allows.

Parties

23(3) The parties to the appeal before the appeal board, and the appeal board, are entitled to be heard on the application for leave to appeal and on the appeal itself.

Order of Court of Appeal

24 The Court of Appeal may

- (a) quash, vary or confirm the order of the appeal board; or
- (b) refer the matter back to the appeal board for further consideration in accordance with any direction of the Court.

REGULATIONS

Regulations

25 The Lieutenant Governor in Council may make regulations

- (a) designating Acts or regulations for the purpose of the definition "designated Act" in section 1;
- (b) respecting any other matter the Lieutenant Governor in Council considers necessary or advisable to carry out the intent of this Act.

ANNUAL REPORT

Annual report

26 Within six months after the end of the government's fiscal year, the appeal board must provide the minister with a report about the board's activities during that fiscal year. The minister shall lay a copy of the report before the Legislative Assembly within 15 days after receiving it if the Assembly is sitting or, if it is not, within 15 days after the next sitting begins.

PROTECTION FROM LEGAL ACTION

Protection from legal action

27 No action or proceeding for damages may be brought against the appeal board or any member of the board because of anything done or omitted in good faith

- (a) in the performance or intended performance of a duty under this Act; or
- (b) in the exercise or intended exercise of a power under this Act.

TRANSITIONAL

Transitional: definitions

28(1) *In this section,*

"former Act" means *The Social Services Administration Act, R.S.M. 1987, c. S165*; (« *ancienne loi* »)

"former designated Act" means *a designated Act as it read immediately before the coming into force of this Act*. (« *ancienne loi désignée* »)

Appeals already commenced

28(2) *Where on the day this Act comes into force an appeal under a former designated Act to the Social Services Advisory Committee under the former Act has been commenced but not finally disposed of, the appeal shall be continued and completed in accordance with that former designated Act as if this Act had not come into force.*

CONSEQUENTIAL AMENDMENTS

29 to 34

NOTE: These sections contained consequential amendments to other Acts that are now included in those Acts.

C.C.S.M. REFERENCE AND COMING INTO FORCE

C.C.S.M. reference

35 This Act may be cited as *The Social Services Appeal Board Act* and referred to as chapter S167 of the *Continuing Consolidation of the Statutes of Manitoba*.

Coming into force

36(1) This Act, except section 33, comes into force on a day fixed by proclamation.

Coming into force: section 33

36(2) Section 33 comes into force on the day *The Social Services Administration Amendment Act*, S.M. 2000, c. 31, comes into force.

NOTE: S.M. 2001, c. 9, except section 33, was proclaimed in force February 18, 2002.