

# The Intelligencer

[« Back](#)

## Hastings CAS facing \$500,000 deficit

Posted 7 hours ago

The Hastings Children's Aid Society (CAS) is facing a \$500,000 deficit for the next fiscal year.

But it's not alone, said executive director Len Kennedy, as Children's Aid Societies across the province are lobbying the government for money in light of a \$22-million collective shortfall. "Almost three-quarters of agencies remain in some form of deficit," he said.

Kennedy attended a Ministry of Children and Youth Services meeting in Toronto recently where he was told his agency will receive \$800,000 from the province to cut into a \$1.3-million deficit it was originally projecting for the next fiscal year.

But the money still leaves the CAS \$500,000 short of covering the budget anticipated for the upcoming fiscal year, expected to be in excess of \$31 million.

The CAS, which finishes the current fiscal year with a \$300,000 deficit, is beginning the process of figuring out how to keep the deficit hole from growing deeper.

And it's not an easy job, Kennedy said, since many of the services it provides to families in need are necessary.

"If we're required to reduce costs by \$500,000, there's no one magic bullet that will do it. We're looking at a series of measures," he said.

"CASs are unique in that, by law, we have mandatory service that must be provided. We're not allowed to wait list or delay or defer required services."

He said decisions on what programs should be cut or whether staff should be laid off won't come up until the budget is presented to the CAS's board of directors, who will meet next in April.

But in the meantime, Kennedy plans to continue working with the province on a funding solution.

He said it's not unusual for the province to announce more funding for child welfare programs throughout the year and he'll have a better idea of his agency's situation after the spring budget comes out in late March.

"We'll continue to have discussions with the ministry about our requirements and hope there may be some further consideration to our shortfall," he said.

Kennedy added the deficit will not have any affect on the Hastings CAS building expansion, which was budgeted for several years ago.

Its two buildings, at 363 and 375 Dundas St. W. are being linked to create one large office, as part of a \$5.5-million expansion plan.

The building is expected to open in November.

[spetrick@intelligencer.ca](mailto:spetrick@intelligencer.ca)

Copyright © 2008 Belleville Intelligencer