



EMERGENCY & COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE REPORT 12-011

1:30 p.m.
Monday, December 10, 2012
Council Chambers
Hamilton City Hall
71 Main Street West

Present: Councillor J. Partridge, Chair
Councillor T. Whitehead, Vice-Chair
Councillors S. Duvall, J. Farr, T. Jackson, B. McHattie, S. Merulla and
B. Morelli

THE EMERGENCY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE PRESENTS REPORT 12-011 AND RESPECTFULLY RECOMMENDS:

1. Election of Chair and Vice Chair

- (a) That Councillor Terry Whitehead be appointed Chair of the Emergency and Community Services Committee for 2013;
- (b) That Councillor Jason Farr be appointed Vice Chair of the Emergency and Community Services Committee for 2013.

2. Hamilton Youth Advisory Committee (HYAC) 2013 Budget Submission (CS12039) (City Wide) (Item 5.2)

- (a) That the Hamilton Youth Advisory Committee (HYAC) 2013 base budget submission in the amount of \$3,890, be approved and forwarded to the 2013 budget process (GIC);
- (b) That, in addition to the base funding, that a one time budget allocation of \$2,500 funded by the Hamilton Youth Advisory Committee Reserve, be approved and forwarded to the 2013 budget process (GIC).

3. Food & Shelter Advisory Committee 2013 Budget Submission (CS12041) (City Wide) (Item 5.3)

That the Food and Shelter Advisory Committee's 2013 base budget submission in the amount of \$500 be approved and forwarded to the 2013 budget process (GIC).

4. Tenant Advisory Committee 2013 Budget Submission (CS12038) (City Wide) (Item 5.4)

That the Tenant Advisory Committee's 2013 base budget submission in the amount of \$1,000 be approved and forwarded to the 2013 budget process (GIC).

5. Hamilton Centre for Civic Inclusion - Funding Agreement (CS11023(d)) (City Wide) (Item 5.5)

That Report CS11023(d) respecting the Hamilton Centre for Civic Inclusion - Funding Agreement be received for information.

6. EMS Monthly Response Time Performance Report – January 1, 2012 to October 31, 2012 (HES12022) (City Wide) (Item 5.6)

That Report HES12022 respecting EMS Monthly Response Time Performance Report – January 1, 2012 to October 31, 2012 be received for information.

7. Defibrillator Standardization and Single Source for the Hamilton Paramedic Service and Hamilton Fire Department and Standardization for the City-Wide Public Access Defibrillation Program (HES12020) (City Wide) (Item 5.7)

- (a) That paramedic and firefighter electrocardiogram (ECG) monitor-defibrillators be standardized to the Zoll Medical Corporation and that those products be a single source purchase directly from the manufacturer;
- (b) That the negotiation with the Zoll Medical Corporation as a single source be conducted by staff of the Hamilton Paramedic Service and the Hamilton Fire Department;
- (c) That staff be authorized to negotiate with the Zoll Medical Corporation as the single source for the supply of any replacement parts and accessory equipment associated with the standardized electrocardiogram monitor-defibrillators;

- (d) That staff be authorized to single source the maintenance and biomedical testing contracts for issues not otherwise captured by the warranty from the Zoll Medical Corporation;
- (e) That staff be authorized to standardize the purchase of public access defibrillator units (AEDs) from the Zoll Medical Corporation in compliance with Procurement Policy # 5.1 – Low Dollar Value Procurements, Policy # 5.1 – Request for Quotations, Policy # 5.3 – Request for Tenders or Policy # 5.4 – Requests for Proposals, as applicable;
- (f) That the procurement of accessory equipment for the public access defibrillators be a single source directly from the Zoll Medical Corporation.

8. Standardization of Emergency Response Vehicles (HES12021) (City Wide) (Item 5.8)

- (a) That the Chevrolet Tahoe Special Service Duty Vehicle manufactured by General Motors be approved as the City's standard for the Hamilton Paramedic Service for use as an Emergency Response Vehicle (ERV);
- (b) That staff be authorized to single source all Emergency Response Vehicle (ERV) conversions to Rowland Emergency Vehicle Products Inc.

9. Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI) (CS12031(a)) (City Wide) (Item 8.1)

- (a) That the General Manager, Community Services Department, or designate, be authorized and directed to deliver and administer the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative;
- (b) That the Housing Stability Benefit Implementation Plan, attached as Appendix A to Report 12-011, be approved;
- (c) That the Mayor and City Clerk be authorized and directed to execute the Service Agreement attached as Appendix B to Report (CS12031(a)) between the City of Hamilton and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, with respect to the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative, in a form satisfactory to the City Solicitor;
- (d) That the General Manager, Community Services Department, or designate, be authorized and directed to execute all ancillary agreements as may be required to deliver the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative, in a form satisfactory to the City Solicitor.

10. Hamilton Seniors Strategy (CS12040) (City Wide) (Item 8.2)

- (a) That staff work with key community stakeholders and the Seniors Advisory committee to develop a Hamilton Seniors Strategy;
- (b) That the cost of developing a Hamilton Seniors Strategy in the amount of \$145,000 be funded from previously approved Capital project #7100954703.

11. Living Wage (Item 9.1)

Whereas, the City of Hamilton had adopted a report that identifies a wage of \$14.95 as a living wage in Hamilton;

And Whereas, all full-time City of Hamilton staff are paid a living wage;

And Whereas, it is important that the City of Hamilton continues to be seen as a leader in advancing the living wage project;

Therefore, be it resolved that staff report back to the General Issues Committee during the 2013 budget process on the feasibility and cost of implementing a living wage rate for all City of Hamilton part time employees.

12. Appointment to the Hamilton Veterans Committee (Item 12.1)

That Larry McMorran be appointed to the Hamilton Veterans Committee for the balance of the 2012 – 2014 term of Council or until such time as a successor is appointed by Council.

13. Interim Manager for Hamilton Farmers' Market (CS12045) (Ward 1) (Item 12.2)

- (a) That staff be directed to enter into a service contract for management of the Hamilton Farmers' Market for a period of 6 months, while the Council directed study of privatizing the management of the Hamilton Farmers' Market is being completed;
- (b) That Report CS12045 respecting the Interim Manager for Hamilton Farmers' Market remain confidential and not be released as a public document as the information relates to identifiable individuals.

FOR THE INFORMATION OF COUNCIL:

(a) CHANGES TO THE AGENDA (Item 1)

The Committee Clerk advised of the following changes:

- (i) Added delegation request from Mr. Will Rowe of the Well (the LGBTQ Community Wellness Centre of Hamilton) wishing to speak to the same topic as the delegation in Item 6.1 the issue of public washrooms. Copies have been distributed; (4.2)
- (ii) Added delegation request from Tom Cooper, of the Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction wishing to provide Councillors with an update on local and provincial activities around the campaign to reverse the provincial cuts to community start up and maintenance benefit. (4.3)
- (iii) Copy of Report SAC 12003 from the Seniors Advisory Committee with recommendations for the Planning Committee respecting the Regulation of Rental Housing, which will be considered at tomorrow's Special Planning Committee meeting. For information only. (Copy attached)
- (iv) Added Notice of Motion 10.1 from Councillor McHattie respecting Living Wage, copies have been distributed.
- (v) Amendment to the recommendation of the Private and Confidential report, Item 12.2 respecting the Interim Manager for the Hamilton Farmers' Market, copies have been distributed.

The agenda was approved as amended.

(b) DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Item 2)

There were none declared.

(c) APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (Item 3)

The Minutes of the November 12, 2012 meeting were approved as presented.

(d) DELEGATION REQUESTS (Item 4)

- (i) The following delegation request was approved:

Lena Bassford, Food4Kids Hamilton Halton Niagara, to provide general information about the Food4Kids Program. (Item 4.1)

- (ii) The following delegation requests were approved and the rules of order waived in order to hear the delegation at today's meeting:

1. Will Rowe, The Well (the LGBTQ) Community Wellness Centre of Hamilton) respecting gender specific public washrooms. (See Item 6.1) (Added Item 4.2)
2. Tom Cooper, of the Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction wishing to provide Councillors with an update on local and provincial activities around the campaign to reverse the provincial cuts to community start up and maintenance benefit.

(e) CONSENT (Item 5)

(i) VARIOUS ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES (Item 5.1):

The following Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes were received:

- (i) Hamilton Youth Advisory Committee Minutes of June 19, 2012 meeting.
- (ii) Hamilton Youth Advisory Committee Minutes of September 18, 2012 meeting.
- (iii) Hamilton Youth Advisory Committee Minutes of October 16, 2012 meeting.
- (iv) Seniors Advisory Committee Minutes of October 5, 2012 meeting

(ii) Report SAC 12003 from the Seniors Advisory Committee (Added Item 5.9)

Report SAC 12003 from the Seniors Advisory Committee containing recommendations for the Planning Committee respecting the Regulation of Rental Housing was received for information.

(f) PUBLIC HEARINGS/DELEGATION REQUESTS (Item 6)

(i) Jim Enos, Hamilton-Wentworth Family Action Council respecting Public Washrooms in City Facilities and a recent decision from the Toronto District School Board to allow boys to use girls washrooms. (Item 4.1)

Jim Enos addressed Committee and read from a prepared statement, copies of which were distributed and a copy was placed in the Clerk's file for the public record and is also available for viewing on the City's website.

Mr. Enos spoke against opposite biological gender usage of washrooms, change rooms and shower facilities in the City of Hamilton.

Mr. Enos submitted a petition of 336 signatures for the Clerk's file, requesting that the City of Hamilton examine its policies and by-laws and work with legal

counsel and the Hamilton Police to ensure that all washrooms, change rooms and shower facilities in the City of Hamilton are places of safety and security by restricting biological males from entering female facilities and biological females from entering male facilities (except in cases of young children in care of a parent and in cases of medical or mechanical emergency or routine cleaning.)

On a motion, Committee received the delegation.

(ii) Will Rowe, The Well (the LGBTQ) Community Wellness Centre of Hamilton) respecting gender specific public washrooms. (See Item 6.1) (Added Item 4.2)

Will Rowe addressed Committee and read from a prepared statement, copies of which he submitted to the Clerk for the official record. He advised that he is a Trans Advocacy and Outreach Co-ordinator at the Well. He is a social worker, married with children and is transgendered. He spoke in support of the right of transgendered people to use public facilities that match their gender identity and he submitted six letters from local institutions also in support of this right.

On a motion, Committee received the delegation.

(iii) Tom Cooper, of the Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction wishing to provide Councillors with an update on local and provincial activities around the campaign to reverse the provincial cuts to community start up and maintenance benefit. (Added Item 4.3)

Tom Cooper addressed Committee with the aid of a PowerPoint presentation. He advised that various communities from across the Province have been invited to attend at Hamilton City Hall on Friday, December 14, 2012 to discuss the issue of the Provincial cuts. Some of the communities attending are from Windsor, Guelph, Brantford, York Region, and Peel Region. This is a united effort. A meeting has taken place with Minister John Milloy. Also, all Liberal leadership candidates, the NDP Leader, Andrea Horwath and the Progressive Conservative Leader Tim Hudak will be contacted.

Tom Cooper responded to questions from the Committee.

On a motion, Committee received the delegation.

(g) PRESENTATIONS (Item 7)

**(i) 2012 Hamilton Youth Advisory Committee Summary (HYAC12-001)
(Item 7.1)**

Camilo Sanchez Galindo, of the Hamilton Youth Advisory Committee addressed Committee with the aid of a PowerPoint presentation. A copy of the hand-out was printed in the agenda.

The topics covered by Camilo Sanchez Galindo included but were not limited to the following:

- Soundtrack for Change Summit;
- Wesley Urban Ministries – Raising the Roof;
- Mental illness among Canadian youth;
- Canada's youth suicide is third highest in the world;
- New Hamilton Youth Advisory Committee members;
- Youth Week Hamilton;
- Moving forward: Navigating your own success;
- Team building;
- Support;
- Future Focus

Committee thanked the presenter.

On a motion, Committee received the presentation.

**(ii) Food & Shelter Advisory Committee respecting achievements to date
(Item 7.2)**

Alexander Ramirez, Chair of the Food and Shelter Advisory Committee addressed Committee with the aid of a PowerPoint presentation. A copy of the hand-out was printed in the agenda

The topics covered by Alexander Ramirez included but were not limited to the following:

- Mandate and Membership;
- Action Plan for 2013;
- 2012 Follow up;
- Engagement Continuum; and,
- Final messages – article in the Toronto Globe and Mail by John Ibbitson entitled *Kudos in order as PH shepherds G20 to surprising consensus.*

Committee thanked the presenter.

On a motion, Committee received the presentation.

(iii) Tenant Advisory Committee respecting achievements to date. (Item 7.3)

John Hawker, Chair of the Tenant Advisory Committee addressed Committee with the aid of a PowerPoint presentation. A copy of the hand-out was printed in the agenda

The topics covered by John Hawker included but were not limited to the following:

- Mandate;
- Objectives;
- Membership;
- 2012 Work Plan;
- Renters as voters;
- Tenant Access to City Hall;
- Monitoring the Official Plan Targets;
- Rooming Houses and Landlord Registry; and,
- Other activities.

Committee thanked the presenter.

On a motion, Committee received the presentation.

(h) DISCUSSION

(i) Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI) (CS12031(a)) (City Wide) (Item 8.1)

Joe-Anne Priel and Gillian Hendry responded to questions from Committee.

(ii) Craig Foye, from the Hamilton Community Legal Clinic requesting to address Committee on December 10, 2012 regarding the staff report on the Consolidated Homelessness prevention Initiative (CHPI). (Item 4.2)

Craig Foye, Community Legal Clinic addressed Committee and read from a prepared statement copies of which were distributed and a copy was also placed in the Clerk's file for the public record and is uploaded on the City's website.

Craig Foye advised that the Clinic supports the staff recommendations of the Housing Stability Benefit Implementation Plan but he outlined some areas of concern around the implementation of this new benefit. The Community Legal Clinic recommended approval of the report.

Committee thanked the delegation.

On a motion, Committee received the delegation.

Committee approved the staff report.

(i) NOTICES OF MOTION (Item 10)

Councillor McHattie presented the following notice of motion:

Living Wage (Item 10.1)

Whereas, the City of Hamilton had adopted a report that identifies a wage of \$14.95 as a living wage in Hamilton; and,

Whereas, all full-time City of Hamilton staff are paid a living wage; and,

Whereas, it is important that the City of Hamilton continues to be seen as a leader in advancing the living wage project;

Therefore, be it resolved that, staff report back during the 2013 budget process with a plan to implement a living wage rate for City of Hamilton part time employees.

On a motion, Committee waived the rules to introduce a motion respecting the living wage.

Committee amended the motion by deleting the words "with a plan to implement" and inserting the words "on the feasibility and cost of implementing" therein.

For disposition of this item see Item 11 of this Report.

(j) GENERAL INFORMATION (Item 11)

Outstanding Business List

(i) The following New Due Date was approved:

Item "E" – How Allocation for Domiciliary Hostel Funding was Spent
Due dated: December 10, 2012
Proposed New Due Date: January 17, 2013

- (ii) The following item was identified as completed and removed from the Outstanding Business List:

Item "I" – Implementation Plan for the Community Homelessness Initiative

(k) PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL (Item 11)

On a motion Committee moved into Closed Session at 3:24 p.m. pursuant to Section 8.1(b) of the Procedural By-law and Section 239 of the Municipal Act to deal with personal matters about an identifiable individual, including municipal or local board employees;

Committee reconvened in Open Session at 3:47 p.m.

(i) Appointment to the Hamilton Veterans Committee (Item 12.1)

For disposition of this Item see Item 12 of this Report.

(ii) Interim Manager for Hamilton Farmers' Market (CS12045) (Ward 1) (Item 12.2)

For disposition of this Item see Item 13 of this Report

(l) ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the Emergency & Community Services Committee meeting adjourned at 3:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Councillor J. Partridge, Chair
Emergency & Community Services Committee

Ida Bedioui
Legislative Co-ordinator
Office of the City Clerk

**City of Hamilton
Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative**

**Housing Stability Benefit
2013 Six Month Implementation Plan**

Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative

The Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI) aims to prevent, address and reduce homelessness by improving access to adequate, suitable and affordable housing that is linked to flexible support services based on people's needs. The CHPI is a result of the consolidation of funding from five provincial homelessness-related programs.

Housing Stability Benefit

On January 1, 2013 the Province will eliminate the Community Start Up and Maintenance Benefit (CSUMB) as a mandatory benefit from social assistance. CSUMB is an important resource for Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) clients. It provides financial assistance to households who are at risk of losing their housing or who are homeless and trying to secure new housing. In this new fiscal environment, the Province has decided that the provision of financial supports for housing is now at the discretion of each municipality who must determine how best to deliver supports and will fall under CHPI.

In Hamilton, a locally designed and funded Housing Stability Benefit (HSB) will be implemented for a period of six months beginning January 1, 2013 to fill the gap left by the removal of CSUMB. HSB is no longer a mandatory Ontario Works or ODSP benefit. It is now a component of the City of Hamilton's Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative.

In 2011, the Ontario Works Program issued CSUMB to 4,590 individuals or families. Based on 2011 spending, it is estimated that ODSP issued CSUMB to 2,200 individuals or families. This means that there must be capacity to provide the HSB to approximately 2,475 Ontario Works participants and 1,100 ODSP clients for the first six months of 2013.

Funding

On November 14, 2012 Council approved a motion to maintain the current service levels for CSUMB for the first six months of 2013. The cost will be funded through provincial CHPI funding, the restatement of the net levy portion of existing programs to CHPI and then from the Community Services Department surplus, corporate surplus, tax stabilization reserve, Social Services Initiative Reserve, OMPF reconciliation or any other combination of funding. The funding required for the continuation of the CSUMB for the second six months of 2013 was referred to the 2013 Budget deliberations.

- A total of \$3,830,200 budgeted for the Housing Stability Benefit for the first six months of 2013. Of that total:
 - \$1,385,000 is allocated to the Housing Help Centre for ODSP clients
 - \$2,445,200 is allocated for Ontario Works participants
- Expenditures will be closely monitored and may be reallocated between Ontario Works and ODSP based on demand

Eligibility

Households in receipt of Ontario Works (OW) and Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) may apply for HSB. Households must be at risk of losing their housing or be homeless and seeking new housing.

The Housing Stability Benefit (HSB) is a benefit provided to assist in establishing a new principal residence, or to prevent eviction or the discontinuance of utilities or heating in an existing residence. The HSB is designed to provide financial assistance at the same level and with the same eligibility criteria as CSUMB for the first six months of 2013.

Ontario Works and Housing Help Centre staff will be referred to as the Administrator of HSB in this document.

The benefit may also be issued where there is a threat to health or welfare in a non-start up situation.

The amount of the HSB payable, as determined by the Administrator of HSB is up to a maximum of \$1500 families with one or more dependent children in a 24-month period; or up to a maximum of \$800 where there are no dependent children in a 24-month period.

Each request for the HSB is reviewed on its own merit. HSPB is provided only where needs have been identified and where no other funds are available.

The approved amount is based on verifiable costs which are necessary to establish a permanent residence in the community, to maintain an existing residence or to maintain utilities. Costs must be verified and documented.

The HSB may be paid in separate amounts provided it covers only one "start- up" event and does not exceed the maximum amounts.

Additional payments may be approved the administrator of HSB if there are exceptional circumstances.

Eligibility Criteria

Establishing a New Principal Residence

In the case of establishing a new principal residence, HSB may be provided if:

- the benefit applicant is establishing a new principal residence within the geographic boundaries of the City of Hamilton;
- the administrator of HSB is satisfied that the recipient will need financial assistance to establish the new principal residence; and
- the benefit applicant meets one of the following criteria:
 - is being discharged from an institution that provided for their basic needs and shelter;
 - has satisfied the administrator of HSB that it would be harmful to their health or welfare to remain in their current residence; or
 - has been evicted from their current residence.

,The need for the recipient to leave their residence must be clearly identified and documented, and a reasonable plan to move into a new residence is in place.

The request for benefits must occur within one month from the date of the establishment of a new principal residence. HSB covers a move into boarding, rental accommodation or rent-to-own, but does not cover a move into a per diem funded residence or group home.

The benefit is provided for:

- victims of family violence
- persons who are homeless
- persons who reside in uninhabitable premises (where the uninhabitable conditions are not clearly evident, verification is sought from a third party, e.g., a building or health inspector or physician)
- persons leaving a residence due to:

- incapacity or death of a supporting care-giver/family member(s);
- overcrowding within the premises;
- documented need for children and sole-support parents to relocate;
- eviction from the premises; or
- a move to more affordable accommodations, where the applicant or recipient was experiencing undue hardship because of extreme shelter costs.
- persons being discharged from institutions such as:
 - correctional facilities;
 - hospitals;
 - hostels;
 - long-term care homes;
 - special care homes; or
 - interval and transition homes.

Allowable Costs

Examples of the cost of establishing a new residence in the community include:

- clothing
- fuel and hydro deposits
- household furnishings
- last month's rent deposit
- moving and transportation to the home of the recipient
- any other costs approved by the Administrator of HSB

Maintaining an Existing Residence

HSB may also be issued where there is a threat to the health or welfare of a recipient or a member of the benefit unit in maintaining their existing residence providing there is eligibility within the 24-month period.

Examples of eligible costs:

- Costs to purchase/rent a generator where it is required to maintain a recipient's health and welfare.
- Costs to purchase or repair household appliances necessary to the health and well-being of the benefit unit where recipients own their homes and are in receipt of the maximum shelter allowance.
- Costs of new or replacement smoke alarms and batteries for recipients who own their homes and are in receipt of the maximum shelter allowance.
- Costs to eradicate bed bugs where there is an isolated case of bed bug infestation to the recipient's belongings

In the case of maintaining an existing residence, HSB may be provided if:

- the benefit applicant will be remaining in their current residence;
- the Administrator of HSB is satisfied that assistance is required to remain in their current residence; and
- the benefit applicant meets one of the following criteria:
 - requires an item necessary to maintain the residence (e.g., appliances necessary to maintain the health and well-being of the benefit unit);
 - has received an eviction notice and has satisfied the Administrator of HSB that, if a payment is made, they will not be evicted;
 - has had a utility or the heating to the current residence cut off and has satisfied the Administrator of HSB that if a payment is made the service will be reconnected; or
 - has received a notice that a utility or the heating to the current residence will be cut off and has satisfied the administrator of HSB that if a payment is made the service will not be discontinued.

In the event that HSB has been exhausted for utility arrears, both OW and ODSP recipients may be referred to the Ontario Works Utility Arrears Program. The OW Utility Arrears Program includes arrears, deposits, removal of load limiters, inspection charges and connection fees for; gas, hydro, water and sewage and furnace or water heater rentals.

Exceptional Circumstances

There may be situations where there is a need to provide HSB more than once in a 24-month period. If exceptional circumstances exist, the Administrator of HSB may approve additional HSB up to the maximum amount.

The following are considered exceptional circumstances:

- the necessity to relocate as a result of a catastrophic event (e.g., flood, fire);
- the necessity to relocate as a result of domestic violence; or
- the necessity to relocate as a result of a disability (e.g., where a recipient is moving to a home that better meets their disability-related needs).

Other exceptional circumstances may be considered where the Administrator of HSB is satisfied that not providing the additional funds would be harmful to the health and well-being of the recipient and/or other members of the benefit unit.

Service Delivery of HSB

Emergency Shelters

People staying in emergency shelters may access the HSB in the shelters. They will be served by OW Hostel Case Managers who regularly visit each of the emergency shelters. The OW Hostels Case Manager will determine eligibility for HSB and issue payments. OW Hostel Case Managers will serve recipients of OW and ODSP, rather than just OW as was previously the case.

Ontario Works Participants

OW participants who are not living at an emergency shelter will access HSB through their OW Case Manager. The OW Case Managers will review applications, determine eligibility for financial assistance and issue payments.

ODSP Clients

ODSP clients who are not living at an emergency shelter will be referred by their ODSP Case Manager to the Housing Help Centre. The Housing Help Centre will be responsible for reviewing applications, determining eligibility and issuing financial assistance to recipients of ODSP.

Eligibility criteria and processes will be the same for both Ontario Works and ODSP clients for the issuance of the HSB.

Notice of Decision

All decisions affecting eligibility and the amount of the HSB will be communicated in writing and will include the following information:

- the decision that has been made;
- the reason(s) for the decision;
- the effective date of the decision;
- the decision cannot be appealed to the Social Benefits Tribunal (SBT);
- that a request for a re-assessment of the decision or the amount of the benefit can be submitted in writing to the administrator of HSB within 30 calendar days after receipt or deemed receipt of the decision letter;

- the rules and procedures of the re-assessment process, the timeline for reviewing the decision and providing notice, and the form of notice.

Clear written explanations to applicants and recipients are intended to prevent requests for re-assessments that are based on misunderstandings regarding a decision.

The decision letter will be sent by mail or delivered in person. A copy of the notice will be retained by Housing Services Division.

Request for Re-Assessment

An applicant may request a re-assessment of the decision to the administrator of the HSB.

If an applicant disagrees with the decision, he/she must request a re-assessment within 30 calendar days from the day the decision is received or deemed to be received. The request must be made in writing by letter/note signed by the applicant or recipient.

The letter/note should include:

- a statement indicating that the applicant wishes to have the decision reviewed;
- the reason he/she disagrees with the decision; and
- the name, case identification number? and signature of the applicant or recipient requesting the review.

The Re-Assessment Request

A re-assessment request is an informal administrative process, and the applicant does not require legal representation. However, the applicant may choose to bring representation to any interview that is conducted during the re-assessment process.

Once a request has been received from an applicant or recipient, the re-assessment must be completed within 10 calendar days.

The reviewer cannot be the original decision-maker, however he/she should have the same or higher decision-making authority.

During the re-assessment process the reviewer should examine the request, including the decision, to determine if the decision was:

- consistent with the Housing Stability Benefit guidelines;
- based on the correct application of the guidelines;
- reasonable;

- based on information that was factual and comprehensive;
- based on the correct interpretation of facts;
- the result of appropriate use of discretionary power; and not the result of administrative error;
- considers additional information provided by the applicant or recipient related to the decision;
- makes a decision based on the test of reasonableness and information available to the reviewer;
- clearly summarizes the reason(s) for arriving at that decision; and
- documents the re-assessment process.

Audit Requirements

Adequate documentation is on file for the verification of costs to support all decisions and the level of benefit issued.

Review of Housing Stability Benefit

A review will be undertaken of the Housing Stability Benefit to determine its effectiveness in meeting its goals after three months and six months. Data regarding the issuance of HSB will be collated every month from both OW and the Housing Help Centre for analysis. The review will also include the participant's experience of the program and preferences regarding future service delivery in the form of focus groups and interviews. Community agencies, Ontario Works and Housing Help Centre staff and community will also be consulted for their feedback regarding this six-month pilot project.