



INFORMATION REPORT

TO:	Chair and Members Emergency & Community Services Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	February 10, 2014
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Social Service Utilization by Individuals From Outside Hamilton (CES14006) (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
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SIGNATURE:	

Council Direction:

Not applicable

Information:

Community and Emergency Services Department staff reviewed service data to explore the extent to which Hamilton's municipal social services are used by people who previously lived in other communities or who are accessing them from outside Hamilton. This report summarizes information collected from the Domiciliary Hostel Program, the Emergency Food System, Emergency Shelters, the Ontario Works Program and the Social Housing Waitlist. Where data is not routinely collected, special data collection was undertaken for the month of June 2013.

Findings:

The Domiciliary Hostel Program subsidizes stays in Residential Care Facilities for people with qualifying low incomes. Previous addresses are not routinely tracked for Domiciliary Hostel residents. During the month of June 2013, there were 25 new admissions to Domiciliary Hostels, of which 3 originated outside of Hamilton, representing 12% of all admissions. Additional data collection would be required to determine if this is a typical number of admissions per month or a typical number of admissions originating outside of Hamilton.

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With Hamilton Food Share acting as the system-hub, Hamilton's Emergency Food System (EFS) is comprised of ten agencies, eight of which offer Food Bank services: Good Shepherd, Mission Services, Neighbour 2 Neighbour, Welcome Inn, Salvation Army (Dundas) and Salvation Army (Hamilton), Living Rock and St. Matthew's House. Three agencies provide Meal Programs: Wesley Urban Ministries, Good Shepherd, Living Rock, and St. Matthew's House. The food banks do not collect data that would determine how many participants moved to Hamilton within the past year. Administrative data for the month of June 2013 and Hunger Count data for the month of March 2013 were analysed to determine how many participants identified postal codes from outside the City of Hamilton. Results indicate that a negligible number (0%) of unique households report a postal code that is located in a municipality other than Hamilton.

Emergency Shelters are a service for people who are homeless and have no other form of accommodation. Information about previous residences within the past year was collected manually for the month of June, 2013 from the intake form that is completed when someone enters a shelter. For the month of June 2013 there were 669 admissions to emergency shelters. Of these, 163 were for people who lived outside of Hamilton in the past year representing 25% of admissions. Toronto was the most frequent point of origin (17%) for people reporting that they had lived elsewhere in the past year. Since this represents only one month, it is not known if this is consistent with broader patterns.

Ontario Works (OW) provides financial and employment assistance to people with no other source of income. The information relating to OW was collected by the OW Intake Unit at the point of application for the month of June 2013 and through the number of file transfers coming into and leaving Hamilton from the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). During June 2013, 88% of people that applied for OW indicated that they have lived in Hamilton longer than one year. Over the past 5 years, the City of Hamilton transferred on average 800 Ontario Works files a year to other municipalities in the Province and received on average 900 Ontario Works files a year from other municipalities.

The Social Housing Waitlist, known in Hamilton as Access to Housing (ATH), is the portal through which individuals and families may apply for social housing. As of May 31, 2013, 90% of ATH applicants listed Hamilton as their current residence when they submitted their application. During the month of June 2013, 74% of ATH applicants listed Hamilton as their residence one year ago. Additional data collection and analysis would be required to determine if this represents a typical month.

It is important to understand the extent to which people in the general population move, otherwise any movement could incorrectly be attributed to seeking services. According to the National Household Survey (2011), 4.7% of Ontarians moved from a different province or municipality in the previous year. Over the past 5 years, 16.7% of people living in Ontario moved from a different province or municipality. It can be assumed that these moves take place for a wide variety of reasons including educational

opportunities, job opportunities, moving closer to family or finding a home that better meets their needs.

Challenges/Limitations:

The Domiciliary Hostel and Emergency Shelter Programs are primarily funded through the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI) which is 100% provincial funding. Ontario Works is cost-shared by the Province of Ontario and the City of Hamilton. The current cost-share is (85.8% Province/14.2% Municipal) and will be covered 100% by the Province in 2018. Administrative costs are cost shared 50/50. The Emergency Food System is primarily funded through charitable donations and a municipal contribution estimated to constitute 4.2% of the total cost. Social Housing is primarily funded by the City of Hamilton. The municipal cost for Social Housing in 2013 was \$42 million.

Much of the data provided in this report is not routinely collected and represents a point in time snapshot rather than a picture of the entire year or trend data over multiple years. It is not known whether the data captured in June 2013 is an exception or the rule. Additional resources and time would be needed to gain a comprehensive understanding of the patterns of resident movement in and out of the municipality and cost implications to the City.

There is also limited ability to compare Hamilton to other municipalities and whether Hamilton's experience is exceptional or typical for a mid-size urban centre. Collecting comparable data would be challenging in that there is no Provincial expectation regarding the collection of this type of data. For example, the City of Toronto's 2013 Street Needs Assessment found that more than 4 out of 5 respondents indicated that they had lived in Toronto longer than one year. This shows approximately 20% of respondents had lived in Toronto less than one year which is similar to the number reported for Hamilton. This data, however, is collected using a methodology that includes people accessing shelters, living on the street and in other settings which makes the numbers hard to compare.

The data gathered for this report represents only people coming to Hamilton, not people leaving Hamilton with the exception of the OW file transfer data. As is demonstrated by the OW file transfer data for the past 5 years, on average, for every 9 files received from another community, Hamilton has transferred 8 files to another community.

Conclusion:

Future data collection and analysis is required to address the challenges as described above in order to provide useful information. Given that this data is not routinely collected by the City of Hamilton or comparator municipalities, it would be a costly and time intensive process.