



INFORMATION REPORT

TO:	Chair and Members Emergency & Community Services Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	June 9, 2014
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Renewal of Homelessness Partnering Strategy (CES14005(a)) (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
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Council Direction:

Not Applicable

Information:

In the summer of 2014, Housing Services Division will release a Call for Applications (CFA) which will integrate two funding programs: the Federal Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) and the Provincial Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI).

The Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS)

Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) announced in December 2013 that the City of Hamilton will receive \$21,141,270 in HPS funding for five years from April 1, 2014 to March 31, 2019. The purpose of the funding is to prevent and reduce homelessness in Hamilton.

Federally funded homelessness programs have been delivered in Hamilton since 1999. There are significant changes in the requirements for this new iteration of HPS funding including prescriptive targets, strategies and interventions. Most notably, ESDC expects the largest communities, including Hamilton, to spend 65% of its allocation on Housing First programs. The City is in a good position to adapt to the new HPS expectations. Hamilton has been supporting services with a Housing First approach since 2007 with the inception of the Hostels to Homes Pilot. Currently, there are local HPS projects such as Transitions to Homes (T2H), Youth Housing Support Team and Supporting Our Sisters (SOS) programs that apply Housing First principles to their service delivery.

Housing Services Division staff conducted an analysis of the potential implications of the changes in expectations for HSP funded programs. In reviewing the programs

funded through HPS from 2011 to 2014, 45% of the existing projects would fit under the newly prescribed Housing First model. However, in order to meet the new 65% allocation requirement for Housing First programs, there will be insufficient funding to support 20% of currently funded homelessness prevention services.

Currently funded projects that meet the new terms and conditions have been extended for one additional year until March 31, 2015 at a cost of \$3.5 million. The extension year will allow time to identify community priorities, plan for a significant shift in the service system and align all future work with the City's 10-year Housing and Homelessness Action Plan. Lastly, the extension year provides time to complete the Call for Applications process for the remaining four years of HPS funding.

The Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI)

The Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI) is a provincial homelessness program funded by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. CHPI was implemented on January 1, 2013. The CHPI funding amount for 2014 is \$15,668,792 and is allocated to a number of different projects related to homelessness. \$762,000 of CHPI funding is allocated to homelessness prevention programs.

Housing First

Housing First is an evidenced based model that provides people experiencing homelessness with permanent housing as quickly as possible. A Housing First approach also provides individuals with intensive case management supports to address issues that impact a person's ability to maintain housing. There is a substantial body of research that demonstrates Housing First's general effectiveness, when compared to 'treatment first' approaches. It is one of the few homelessness interventions that are considered a "best practice".

Homelessness Prevention

Homelessness Prevention is a series of activities that help mitigate the risk factors for homelessness. Some risk factors for homelessness include:

- Poverty
- Family breakdown (divorce, abuse, young people leaving home)
- Leaving institutional care (jail, child welfare, long term hospitalization)
- Trauma history
- Social isolation (weak natural network of supports)

This is a relatively new area of study and as such a comprehensive definition is lacking. Local organizations, however, have been looking at ways to increasingly integrate a prevention focus in their work. Some examples of homelessness prevention activities may include: shelter diversion, tenant education, direct client benefits and financial management supports. This list is not exhaustive.

Prioritization Process

The HPS prescribes a series of activities and outcomes (with targets) that must be achieved by communities. Information on the targets identified in the HPS is attached as Appendix A to Report CES14005(a).

The CHPI does not prescribe activities but instead identifies a series of broad outcomes that are expected to be achieved.

To prepare for the joint funding call and for the shift in the service system to Housing First and homelessness prevention, the Housing Services Division has engaged in research, data analysis and community consultation. Two local consultation events were held in March, 2014. Over 160 people in total attended the events. The stakeholders who attended these events included organizations providing homelessness services, internal stakeholders, other sectors such as corrections and health as well as people accessing homelessness services in our community. At each consultation, community stakeholders were asked to identify community priorities related to Housing First and Homelessness Prevention.

Community Priorities

Housing First

Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) provided five Housing First activities and asked communities to identify how much of their allocation would be spent in that area. Hamilton has \$2,336,110 annually for Housing First projects. The following table describes how that allocation will be spent.

Activity	Description	Amount	Allocation
Housing First Readiness	Planning activities to ensure the community can implement Housing First successfully – examples include partnership development, identification of barriers to success.	\$186,000	8%
Intake and Assessment	Ensuring that the right people are provided the right kinds of service by having cross-community tools that assess needs.	\$186,000	8%
Connecting to and Maintaining Housing	Establishing solid housing placements by facilitating access to units that the participant chooses, ensuring all tenants have renter's or tenant insurance and building strong relationships with landlords.	\$560,000	24%

SUBJECT: Renewal of Homelessness Partnering Strategy (CES14005(a)) (City Wide) - Page 4 of 6

Case Management	Working with participants who are housed to ensure that they are stable and successful by responding to needs, providing referrals, supports to increase social integration.	\$1,308,000	56%
Data and Tracking	Tracking the housing outcomes of participants to ensure the interventions are working.	\$93,000	4%
Total:		\$2.3 million	100%

Housing First Allocations – Rationale

The bulk of the Housing First funding will be allocated to Case Management. Case Management is a service approach that assesses a person's needs and supports them through those needs. The literature suggests that Case Management is a best practice for achieving outcomes within a Housing First framework.

Connecting to and maintaining housing was also highly prioritized. Finding housing that is a good 'fit' for the participant, fostering a strong relationship between the participant and the landlord and ensuring all tenants have renter's or tenant insurance is critical to successful housing outcomes for participants and landlords.

Homelessness Prevention

Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) provided four homelessness prevention activities for the community to prioritize. Hamilton has \$2,019,905 annually for Homelessness Prevention projects (this includes the CHPI allocation). This is approximate given that the annual allocation from the Provincial government is not yet confirmed for 2015/2016. The following table describes how that allocation would be spent.

Activity	Description	Amount	Allocation
Direct Services	Services would include housing placement (helping people who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness find housing) and housing loss prevention (helping people who are housed to stay housed).	\$1,615,925	80%
Facilities	Increasing the capacity of facilities that support people experiencing homelessness or risk of homelessness.	\$0	0%
Coordination of Resources	Keeping apprised of innovations and best practices in homelessness prevention, coordination of services, community planning.	\$302,985	15%

Data	Developing a better understanding of the homeless population and tracking the housing outcomes of participants to ensure the interventions are working.	\$100,995	5%
Total:		\$2.0 million	100%

Homelessness Prevention Allocations – Rationale

The bulk of the homelessness prevention allocation will be dedicated to direct services to individuals and families. Given the significant targets set for Hamilton for homelessness prevention, investment in services that support people is sound.

There will not be any funding allocations to support new or existing facilities. Given the new HPS direction there will a reduction in programs and as much funding as possible will need to be preserved for direct services. There were no upcoming capital projects identified for homelessness services during the community consultations held in March 2014.

Aboriginal Community

In the fall of 2013, Bob Stevenato and Associates was hired to review the HPS funding relationship between the urban Aboriginal community and the City of Hamilton. A literature review, data analysis and comprehensive community consultation was completed.

The consultant recommended continuing to provide the urban Aboriginal community 20% of HPS funding. This arrangement was first developed in 2004 in acknowledgment of the disproportionate rates of homelessness among Aboriginal people. The review was completed to ensure that the allocation was still relevant and rationalized.

Other recommendations include better aligning the homelessness funding planning processes between the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities, having increased presence from City staff at Aboriginal events in Hamilton and a commitment to collect better Aboriginal homeless data. An executive summary of the report will be available by June 30, 2014.

Next Steps

The HPS and CHPI funding programs are focused on two homelessness interventions that are identified in Hamilton's 10-year Housing and Homelessness plan; Housing First and Homelessness Prevention. The City's 10-year Housing and Homelessness Action Plan has challenged the community to think from a more coordinated perspective about how to solve the issue of homelessness. Therefore, the City will develop a call for proposals in the summer of 2014 that focuses on these two interventions using the two funding streams. When combining the two funding streams Hamilton's annualized

Housing First allocation is \$2,336,110 and the Homelessness Prevention allocation is \$2,019,905

Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) must first approve Hamilton's Community Plan for HPS funding. Once approved, a Call for Applications will be released that aligns with the approved priorities and targets. The Call for Applications will be released in the Summer of 2014 and evaluated in the Fall of 2014. Final decisions will be communicated to proponents by December 31, 2014.

Some projects that are currently receiving funding from HPS may not be successful in the Call for Applications. Unsuccessful applicants will have at least three months' notice so they can secure alternative funding sources or plan to reduce service and staff levels. Successful applicants will begin receiving funding effective April 1, 2015.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

Appendix A to Report CES14005(a): Homelessness Partnering Strategy Targets