



INFORMATION REPORT

TO:	Chair and Members Emergency & Community Services Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	September 8, 2014
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Additional Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative Funding (CES14051) (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
PREPARED BY:	Gillian Hendry 905-546-2424 ext. 4818
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SIGNATURE:	

Council Direction:

Not applicable

Information:

On January 1, 2013, the Province of Ontario consolidated five homelessness funding programs into a single funding envelope called the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI). At the same time, they also removed the Community Start-Up and Maintenance Benefit (CSUMB) from Social Assistance indicating the municipalities could fund their own housing benefit with the CHPI funding if they wished. To assist municipalities with this transition, the province provided a one-time grant. Hamilton received \$3,190,278 for the period of January 1, 2013 to March 31, 2014.

As part of the 2014 Ontario Budget, the Province announced that the one-time funding will be made permanent starting with the 2014-2015 provincial fiscal year. A letter dated July 28, 2014 from Janet Hope, Assistant Deputy Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) confirmed that there will be a province-wide contribution to CHPI of an additional \$42 million annually. Although confirmation of Hamilton's allocation has not been received; it is expected to remain at \$3,190,278.

The announcement is timely, as Housing Services Division staff has identified a number of pressures in the 2014 CHPI Budget. Housing Services Divisions staff has begun the process of allocating the additional funding to address 2014 pressures. The following principles were developed to aid in the process:

- Existing funding commitments should be sustainable and reduce reliance on reserves;

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- The City's administration of the program should be adequately resourced;
- Emergency Shelter Services should be adequately resourced;
- Existing strategic directions should be considered including the City's 10-year Housing and Homelessness Action Plan;
- There should be a focus on mandated municipal responsibilities for housing and homelessness; and,
- Utilization of evidence-based decision making.

Pressures that fall within CHPI will be considered in the allocation of the additional CHPI funding. The June 30, 2014 Budget Exception Report confirmed a pressure of \$697,909 for the following programs:

- Housing Stability Benefit;
- Utility Arrears;
- Rent Bank.

There are also pressures identified in the emergency shelter system that are undergoing further analysis:

- Emergency shelter costs for women, and;
- Emerging pressure at Notre Dame House which is an emergency shelter and resource centre for youth.

Housing Services Division staff will review the Housing Stability Benefit, Utility Arrears Benefit and Rent Bank Programs to determine if the high use is likely to continue in 2015 and if so, what strategies should be used to reduce costs. As noted in Report CS13051(a) - Pressure at Emergency Shelters Serving Single Homeless Women, staff are working with shelter providers to develop a plan to address medium and long-term shelter needs for single homeless women.

Housing Services Division staff will review the pressure identified by Good Shepherd Centre at Notre Dame House. Additional funding will be considered pending a review of the organization's Audited Financial Statements and a comparison with costs for comparable programs in other municipalities. If it is determined that additional funding is appropriate, the General Manager of Community and Emergency Services has delegated authority to allocate the CHPI funds.

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In addition to the above budget pressures, two reports will be provided to the E&CS Committee at the September 8, 2014 meeting regarding allocation of the additional funding for a pilot project to increase access to recreation opportunities for Domiciliary Hostel residents (Report CES14048) and an additional Contract Analyst position to Housing Services Division budgeted complement (Report CES14047) to manage the development and monitoring of service agreements with agencies that receive CHPI funding.

The additional funding will also help provide a long term funding strategy for several initiatives that are currently being funded through the one-time transitional grant from the Province or through reserve funding such as the Housing Stability Benefit and funding for the food banks and Christmas Hamper Program.

An analysis of existing and emerging pressures in the housing and homelessness system will be conducted by Housing Services Division in the fall of 2014. Staff will return to the E&CS Committee in January 2015 with recommendations regarding the allocation of the additional CHPI funding as part of the 2015 budget process.