



CITY OF HAMILTON
COMMUNITY AND EMERGENCY SERVICES DEPARTMENT
Neighbourhood and Community Initiatives Division

TO:	Chair and Members Emergency & Community Services Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	October 24, 2016
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction Funding Increase (CES16046) (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
PREPARED BY:	Mark Weingartner 905-546-2424 ext. 6095 Al Fletcher, 905-546-2424 ext. 4711
SUBMITTED BY:	Suzanne Brown, Director Neighbourhood and Community Initiatives Division Community and Emergency Services Department
SIGNATURE:	

RECOMMENDATION

That an increase in the annual funding for the Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction in the amount of \$30,000, be referred to the 2017 budget process.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction (HRPR) was co-convened by the City of Hamilton and the Hamilton Community Foundation (HCF) in 2005 in response to the high level of poverty and the negative socioeconomic impact of this on individuals, families, and particularly children. The HRPR works through a multi-sector collaborative approach and with a focus on community impact. Roundtable members come from across the city and include leaders from the business and non-profit sectors, government, education and faith communities as well as individuals who experience poverty daily. Strategic direction is provided by a steering committee.

Two examples of projects that best demonstrate the Roundtable’s collaborative and innovative approach to addressing the issue of poverty are the Speakers Bureau and School Curriculum Resource projects.

Speak Now Hamilton brought together 25 people with diverse but direct experience living with poverty and provided training in public speaking, media engagement and public policy. Speakers now share their personal stories with schools, faith organizations, service clubs and business audiences in order to inform, educate and break down stereotypes. Over the past two years, speakers have participated in over 200 presentations and engaged over 4,000 Hamiltonians at variety of venues

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“Learning about Income Disparity in Hamilton, Ontario” is a curriculum resource for secondary school teachers that was developed in partnership with the Hamilton Wentworth District School Board, the Wentworth District Catholic School Board, City of Hamilton Public Health Services, McMaster University School of Nursing and Bachelor of Health Sciences Honours Program. This resource supports components of Ontario secondary school curriculum, including Grade 9 Religion and Grade 10 Civics, but can also be used in the community to support an understanding of income disparity in Hamilton.

HRPR has received two national level awards. The Canadian Urban Institute’s David Crombie Award¹ in 2009 and the Tamarack Institute/Vibrant Communities Canada’s National Cities Reducing Poverty Award in 2015.

Since its establishment in 2005, the HRPR has received \$107,700 from the City of Hamilton and \$50,000 from the Hamilton Community Foundation for operational funding for staff and core activities. Staff support to the HRPR includes one full-time director and one part-time administrative coordinator, as well as a part-time staff (10 hours per week) who supports the “Fix the Gap” campaign.

HRPR has requested an increase in funding to support the increased costs of the Roundtable. Funding has remained stagnant since the inception of the Roundtable while cost of living, engagement activities, initiatives, and expansion of membership has increased.

Alternatives for Consideration – Not Applicable

FINANCIAL – STAFFING – LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial: In its role as co-convenor and funder, the City of Hamilton has provided \$107,700 in annual funding to the Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction since 2005. HRPR requires a \$30,000 increase in funding from the City of Hamilton, a total commitment of \$137,700, to continue at the same operational level.

Staffing: There are no staffing implications associated with Report CES16046.

Legal: There are no legal implications associated with Report CES16046.

¹ The David Crombie Award is given in recognition of people and initiatives that provide collaborative solutions to the complex problems facing Canada's largest urban region - the Greater Golden Horseshoe, and, through engaging community members with government and private sector partners, support the repair, regeneration and/or enhancement of the region's public realm.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction (HRPR or the Roundtable) was co-convened by the City of Hamilton and the Hamilton Community Foundation (HCF) with the goal to reduce and eliminate poverty through the aspirational vision of “Making Hamilton the Best Place to Raise a Child”.

The Roundtable works locally, provincially and nationally on policy and systems-level change to achieve long-term solutions to poverty. HRPR does not deliver programming or direct services. Its role is to create awareness and understanding about poverty and the need to invest in poverty reduction in order to create a healthier, inclusive and more prosperous Hamilton.

Priorities and current initiatives of the Roundtable include:

- shifting public attitudes about poverty
- encouraging local employers to adopt living wages
- providing provincial and national leadership in profiling and promotion of living wage
- working with the provincial government on comprehensive social assistance reform
- encouraging the federal government to implement a national poverty strategy
- advocating for affordable housing and affordable transit
- advocating for changes to predatory lending services

Specific initiatives of the Roundtable include the following:

- Speak Now Hamilton – a speakers bureau that empowers individuals by giving voice to their lived experience with poverty and social exclusion
- Living Wage Hamilton – supporting community conversations, providing a consistent living wage definition, calculation methodology, and strategy for recognizing corporate and community leadership regarding local living wage policies
- A working group on Social Assistance Reform in Ontario
- Fix the Gap – developing education strategies and supporting work to implement evidence based social assistance rates in Ontario
- Vote to End Poverty – supporting access to information regarding the “Fair Elections Act”, necessary ID, issues related to income security, First Nations, housing and childcare
- Research on social assistance rates, income security and predatory lending

Funding and Oversight

The HRPR currently receives \$107,700 from the City of Hamilton and \$50,000 from the Hamilton Community Foundation for its operational funding which includes staff and core activities. Staff support to the HRPR includes one full-time director and one part-time administrative coordinator, as well as a part-time staff (10 hours per week) who supports the “Fix the Gap” campaign.

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Hamilton Community Legal Clinic provides approximately \$20,000 of in-kind financial support through rent, cleaning, accounting, administrative support and oversight. HRPR reports to the Executive Director of Hamilton Community Legal Clinic and thus to their Board of Directors.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND LEGISLATED REQUIREMENTS

None

RELEVANT CONSULTATION

Community and Emergency Services Finance and Administration Division was consulted and have no concerns with this report.

ANALYSIS AND RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

Poverty is a complex and multifaceted issue. HRPR's approach has always been that collaboration is the best way to address such a complex issue. Specifically, the many agencies, associations, organizations, institutions and residents have been invaluable to the work of the Roundtable. One of the major focuses has consistently been to shift attitudes about what poverty looks like in Hamilton, and to change the conversation.

The HRPR role is unique in Hamilton in that it includes diverse partners and focuses on very specific poverty reduction goals that cut across all sectors. The Roundtable has received \$107,700 annually for the past ten years without any increases. In order to continue their work at the same operational level, HRPR requires an increase of \$30,000 for a total City commitment of \$137,700 per year. Without this increase, the Roundtable will face significant challenges in meeting its current mandate and will be severely limited in the new work it is able to support.

ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION

None

ALIGNMENT TO THE 2016 – 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN

Community Engagement & Participation

Hamilton has an open, transparent and accessible approach to City government that engages with and empowers all citizens to be involved in their community.

Economic Prosperity and Growth

Hamilton has a prosperous and diverse local economy where people have opportunities to grow and develop.

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Healthy and Safe Communities

Hamilton is a safe and supportive city where people are active, healthy, and have a high quality of life.

Culture and Diversity

Hamilton is a thriving, vibrant place for arts, culture, and heritage where diversity and inclusivity are embraced and celebrated.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

None

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