



CITY OF HAMILTON
COMMUNITY & EMERGENCY SERVICES DEPARTMENT
Ontario Works Division

TO:	Chair and Members Emergency & Community Services Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	December 12, 2016
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Ontario Works Caseload Contingency Plan (CS09021(g)) (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
PREPARED BY:	Linda Button 905-546-2424 Ext. 3104 Steve Jacques 905-546-2424 Ext. 4058
SUBMITTED BY:	Joe-Anne Priel General Manager Community & Emergency Services Department
SIGNATURE:	

RECOMMENDATION

That the Ontario Works Caseload Contingency Plan staffing levels of up to 26 temporary FTE to December 31, 2017 be funded in the amount \$2,268,670 gross / \$1,134,330 net from the Ontario Works Stabilization Reserve #110044.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Ontario Works (OW) Caseload Contingency Plan was approved by Council in January 2009 (Report CS09021). There have been six reports since that time which included the hiring and retaining of additional staffing to support the increase in the OW caseload with the onset of the 2008 Recession. In total, 30 additional staff were hired whose end date had been extended to December 31, 2016 (CS09021(f)). The OW contingency staff has been funded 50% by the province and 50% by the Ontario Works Stabilization Reserve.

In 2015, an organizational and process review of the OW program was conducted (Report CES15011). The purpose of this review was to determine how to achieve a sustainable organizational structure, efficient business processes and relevant resource alignment that will provide cost effective and quality services to best meet the diverse needs of Hamilton's residents.

The review resulted in a number of recommendations that are currently being implemented to establish the foundation of a more person-centred, integrated model of service delivery. These changes align with the social services reform expected by the Province in the next several years.

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OUR Mission: To provide high quality cost conscious public services that contribute to a healthy, safe and prosperous community, in a sustainable manner.

OUR Culture: Collective Ownership, Steadfast Integrity, Courageous Change, Sensational Service, Engaged Empowered Employees.

The current restructuring of OW has resulted in a reduction of the number of contingency staff needed to support the continuing organizational changes. It is therefore recommended that a contingency staffing level of up to 26 FTEs be maintained until the structure has been finalized. This is anticipated to be completed by December 31, 2017 within the existing permanent budget and FTEs.

Alternatives for Consideration – Not Applicable

FINANCIAL – STAFFING – LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial:

Approximately \$1,134,330 net is required to cover the cost of the contingency staffing from January 1, 2017 to December 31, 2017. Currently, there is a balance of \$1,809,895 in the Ontario Works Stabilization Reserve #110044 however year end entries will reduce the amount available.

Staffing:

The funding request will support the continuation of up to temporary 26 FTE staff positions through to December 31, 2017 while the new structure is finalized within the existing permanent budget and FTEs. Throughout the year, vacancies will be reviewed and vacant positions will be reduced through attrition where possible.

Legal:

There are no legal implications associated with Report CS09021(g).

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The OW Contingency Plan was developed and approved by City Council in response to the recession that started approximately September 2008 when the caseload was 10,056. The caseload steadily increased to 14,166 by July 2011.

Between 2009 and 2012, up to 30 additional staff were hired to address the increase in the Ontario Works caseload during Phases 2 and 3 of the OW Contingency Plan.

In July 2013, approval was received to maintain the 30 full time employees until April 2015 (Report CS09021(d)).

In 2014, the General Manager of Community and Emergency Services began planning for an organizational review. One of the reasons for conducting a review was that the OW caseload average of 12,456 in 2014 was approximately 2,500 cases above pre-recession levels, and the OW Stabilization Reserve was not a sustainable source of funding for the additional contingency staff.

The new Social Assistance Management System (SAMS) was implemented in November 2014. It was apparent within the first weeks of the implementation of SAMS that a crisis situation had developed creating challenges for OW staff and clients. In order to avoid further disruption in service delivery and to allow time for stabilization and recovery along with time to complete the OW Organizational Review, it was recommended that the current staff levels be retained. Report CS09021(e) was approved by City Council on February 25, 2015, which allowed staffing levels to be maintained until April 30, 2016.

Since the recommendations of the OW Organizational Review were finalized in March 2016 and had not yet been acted upon, approval was sought and received to retain the additional staff until December 31, 2016 (Report CS09021(f)).

Recommendations resulting from the review that will establish a foundation for a more person-centred, integrated model of service delivery are being implemented. The first steps in the transition were consolidating the two OW Divisions under the direction of one Director and restructuring the OW leadership team. Following the recruitment process and hiring the Director of the unified OW Division in September 2016, selection processes for newly defined Manager and Supervisor positions were conducted. The result of these selection processes is a management team of seven Human Services Managers effective October 3, 2016 and 17 Supervisors positions effective December 5, 2016.

While progress has been made, more work needs to be done before the structure is finalized. A series of business process reviews are currently underway to ensure a sustainable organizational structure, efficient business processes and an allocation of resources that will provide cost effective and quality services.

Although the restructuring has resulted in the need for fewer contingency staff, from 30 FTEs down to 26 FTEs, it is necessary to maintain these additional staff during this transition period. This is an interim measure and will not be sustained after the structure is complete. Throughout the year, vacancies will be reviewed under the new structure and vacant positions will be reduced through attrition where possible.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND LEGISLATED REQUIREMENTS

City of Hamilton, Corporate Budget Policy, Budgeted Complement Control Policy CBP-1 where temporary complement for a duration of twenty-four months or longer requires Council approval.

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RELEVANT CONSULTATION

Finance and Administration, Corporate Services Department provided details regarding the funding options and financial implications. They are in agreement with the proposed funding sources recommended in this report.

ANALYSIS AND RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

The recommendation to maintain the temporary staffing levels is made for the following reasons:

- The caseload size is still above pre-recession levels. While the number of cases has declined from the peak of over 14,000 cases, the average caseload for 2016 as of September is 12,819, still approximately 2,800 cases above pre-recession levels.
- Given that changes related to the organizational review including a leadership team that is in the midst of transition and a series of business process reviews that are underway, retaining up to 26 additional staff would help to maintain quality service delivery during this transition period and avoid excessive disruption to staff's day-to-day work activities.

ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION

None.

ALIGNMENT TO THE 2016 – 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN

Economic Prosperity and Growth

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

Healthy and Safe Communities

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

Our People and Performance

Hamiltonians have a high level of trust and confidence in their City government.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

None.