



# INFORMATION REPORT

<b>TO:</b>	Chair and Members Emergency & Community Services Committee
<b>COMMITTEE DATE:</b>	October 5, 2017
<b>SUBJECT/REPORT NO:</b>	2018 Homelessness Enumeration (CES17038) (City Wide)
<b>WARD(S) AFFECTED:</b>	City Wide
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<b>SUBMITTED BY:</b>	Vicki Woodcox Acting General Manager Community & Emergency Services Department
<b>SIGNATURE:</b>	

## Council Direction:

Not Applicable

## Information:

The Province issued a Ministerial Directive under the Housing Services Act in 2017, requiring Service Managers to complete homelessness enumeration every two years, beginning in 2018. Homelessness enumeration measures the number of people who are experiencing homelessness at a point in time, including those who are staying in emergency shelters, transitional housing or sleeping outdoors. Point in Time Counts and Registry Weeks are examples of homelessness enumeration methodologies.

All communities receiving Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) funding are encouraged by Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) to participate in a National Point in Time Count in 2018. HPS has confirmed that 60 out of 61 Community Entities will take part. Conducting one homelessness enumeration in April 2018 will fulfil the requirements of both the Federal and Provincial governments. The enumeration will provide vital local information about people experiencing homelessness in Hamilton, while also contributing to the understanding of homelessness provincially and nationally.

## Objective

The objective of the 2018 homelessness enumeration is to provide a snapshot of homelessness across the entire City. The results will be compared to the results of Hamilton's 2016 Point in Time Count, which established a baseline for the number of individuals in the City who are experiencing absolute homelessness. Completing a second city-wide homelessness enumeration will provide the opportunity to track local

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progress related to homelessness reductions over time. The enumeration will also provide data that will inform local homelessness policy and practices.

The 2018 homelessness enumeration will follow the same methodology used in 2016. A standardized survey will be administered to determine the characteristics of individuals experiencing homelessness such as age, gender, Indigenous identity, Veteran status, and health and housing needs. In addition to providing a snapshot of who is experiencing homelessness in Hamilton, this information will be used to match individuals with the appropriate level and type of supports.

In February 2016, with the backbone support of community partners and the financial support of ESDC, 263 volunteers and professional social service staff surveyed 504 individuals experiencing homelessness in Hamilton. Of those surveyed, 138 were found to be eligible for, and have subsequently been referred to, Housing First programs.

While it won't be possible to count every single person who is experiencing homelessness in Hamilton, the 2018 homelessness enumeration will provide a better understanding of homelessness from those who do participate. Because the enumeration will not capture everyone, there will be some populations that may be underrepresented. For example, women who identify as experiencing homelessness may be underrepresented as there are fewer emergency shelter beds for women in Hamilton. Women may also be more likely to stay with family and friends rather than access formal supports.

Hamilton's participation in the 2018 homelessness enumeration continues to support the efforts of the 20,000 Homes Campaign, a national movement led by the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness. The campaign aims to house 20,000 of Canada's most vulnerable people experiencing homelessness by July 1, 2020.

## **Funding**

The cost for Hamilton to participate in the Point in Time Count will be covered by Federal Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) funds. ESDC has approved Hamilton's request for \$81,000 to support participation in the Point in Time Count. Additional resources will be leveraged with existing HPS administration funding, allowing the City to fulfil the prescribed enumeration methodology and expectations set forth by ESDC and the Province.

The funding will cover a 2 day count across the entire city; comprehensive volunteer recruitment and training; data collection and data management support; robust data analysis; and survey materials.

There is no impact to the Net Levy for Hamilton's 2018 Point in Time Count.

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## **Process**

Under the leadership of Housing Services Division, an implementation plan will be developed to include community consultation with all major stakeholders, people with lived experience, and other local communities across Canada.

In recognition of the principles of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Calls to Action, the project team will include an Indigenous Coordinator. The implementation planning process will undertake specific strategies to work in collaboration with Hamilton's Aboriginal Community Advisory Board on specific methods for engaging and surveying Indigenous peoples experiencing homelessness. This approach is motivated by the principle that reconciliation requires joint leadership, trust building, accountability and transparency, as well as investment of resources.

Volunteers will be recruited to assist in completing surveys with people experiencing homelessness. Volunteers will be required to attend training on how to conduct the surveys and how to engage with vulnerable populations.

## **Current Status and Next Steps**

Housing Services Division staff will begin to engage stakeholders in the planning of the homelessness enumeration in September 2017 and will participate in the training hosted by ESDC for local Homelessness Enumeration Coordinators in November 2017.

The objective is to complete the homelessness enumeration by April 30, 2018. Results of the survey will be shared publicly in a community debrief event.

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