



Hamilton

# INFORMATION REPORT

<b>TO:</b>	Chair and Members Emergency & Community Services Committee
<b>COMMITTEE DATE:</b>	January 22, 2018
<b>SUBJECT/REPORT NO:</b>	Home for Good Local Funding Allocations (CES17042(b)) (City Wide)
<b>WARD(S) AFFECTED:</b>	City Wide
<b>PREPARED BY:</b>	Nadia Zelisko 905-546-2424 ext. 3863 Amanda DiFalco 905-546-2424 ext. 3132 Dave Brodati 905-546-2424 ext. 4818
<b>SUBMITTED BY:</b>	Vicki Woodcox Acting Director, Housing Services Division Community and Emergency Services Department
<b>SIGNATURE:</b>	

## Council Direction:

On December 8, 2017, Council approved the following recommendations of Report CES17042(a):

- (a) That the General Manager of Community and Emergency Services or designate be authorized to enter into and execute an Agreement with the Ontario Minister of Housing to administer the Home for Good (HFG) Program as of September 11, 2017 and any ancillary agreements required to give effect thereto in a form satisfactory to the City Solicitor; and,
- (b) the General Manager of the Community and Emergency Services Department or designate be authorized:
  - (i) To approve funding for initiatives in alignment with City's Expression of Interest (EOI) application to the Provincial HFG Program and the priorities identified in Hamilton's Housing and Homelessness Action Plan and Homelessness Partnering Strategy 2014-2019 Community Plan; and,
  - (ii) To implement spending caps, benefit frequency limits, or other controls necessary to ensure costs are contained within the approved budgeted amount.

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**Information:**

The provincial HFG program is a homelessness-focused program that supports the Province's goal of ending chronic homelessness by 2025. HFG provides housing assistance and support services to people who are homeless or at imminent risk of homelessness within the provincial priority homelessness areas: chronic homelessness; youth homelessness; Indigenous homelessness; and, homelessness following transitions from provincially-funded institutions.

HFG supports the Housing First approach identified in Hamilton's 10-year Housing and Homelessness Action Plan and aligns with Action Plan Outcome 3: *People have the individualized supports they need to help them obtain and maintain housing.*

In May 2017, Housing Services Division submitted an Expression of Interest (EOI) application for HFG funding. The EOI application sought support for:

- Enhanced Housing focussed resources to ensure that homelessness is a brief and non-recurring experience in people's lives
- Enhanced resources to meet the needs of individuals experiencing homelessness with the most complex, co-occurring issues that are likely to impact overall housing stability, including increased resources for housing allowances and program supports
- Solutions to offset community pressures in effectively supporting individuals at risk of homelessness
- Capital funding for additional supportive housing units

While the EOI application highlighted existing community partnerships and stakeholders for housing and homelessness programs, it did not recommend specific funding allocations to organizations.

The Province advised the Mayor on September 11, 2017, that Hamilton will be awarded \$2,827,351 in program funds over 3 years. This represents 68% of the program funding amount requested in the EOI. Capital funding requested through the EOI was not approved.

Although a three year allocation was announced, the Province has indicated that the City of Hamilton will continue to receive funding for housing assistance and supports through the HFG program on an ongoing basis beyond the initial three years, subject to actual take-up, annual provincial budget approvals, and fulfilment of accountability requirements.

**HFG Program Overview:**

HFG is a homelessness-focused program delivered through local municipalities that supports the Province’s goal of ending chronic homelessness by 2025. HFG investments must be consistent with the prescribed Provincial guidelines.

HFG Program Guidelines indicate that the funding is intended to be for ending a person’s homelessness through housing assistance and supports. There are a series of outcomes related to housing assistance and support services that must be reported back to the Province on a quarterly basis.

The program will contribute to the achievement of the following direct outcomes:

- a) Increased number of households will receive support services and housing assistance, to be reported by provincial priority homelessness area
- b) Increased number of households remaining housed after one year, to be reported by provincial priority homelessness area

**Funding Breakdown:**

The breakdown of Hamilton’s HFG funding allocation is as follows:

Notional Funding Allocation		
Year 1 (2017-18)	Year 2 (2018-19)	Year 3 (2019-20)
\$827,351	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000

The multi-year funding allocation amounts to \$250,000 quarterly. However, as the City received the current fiscal year’s allocation late in the year with only the last quarter of the fiscal year to expend all the funds, an additional one-time surplus of \$577,351(\$827,351-\$250,000=\$577,351) must be spent by March 31, 2018.

The City of Hamilton may use up to 10% of the allocated operating funds to cover administration costs.

**The Funding Allocation Prioritization Process:**

Provincial deadlines limited the amount of time available to determine local funding allocations for Years 1 and 2 of the program: the Year 1 allocation is to be fully expended by March 31, 2018. The Take Up Plan for Years 1 and 2 were required at the same time.

The tight timelines, together with the fact that the City of Hamilton did not receive the full funding amount requested in the EOI application, limited the ability of Housing Services

Division to complete a Call For Applications (CFA) process and launch new programs without significant risk of underspending and returning funds. Instead, City staff needed to prioritize the initiatives in the EOI application using existing information.

City staff engaged in extensive multi-year community consultation to arrive at the strategies outlined in the 10-year Housing and Homelessness Action Plan and the priorities for the 2014-2019 Community Plan. From 2012 to 2015, a far-reaching community consultation and planning process on homelessness funding was conducted.

The City of Hamilton regularly seeks community input relevant to these strategies and priorities through ongoing consultation with numerous planning tables including, but not limited to, the Housing and Homelessness Planning Table, the Homelessness Funding Implementation Group, Aboriginal Community Advisory Board, Housing and Homelessness Advisory Committee, Housing First Check in Table, Women's Housing and Homelessness Planning Collaborative, Men's Emergency Services Committee, and the Street Youth Planning Collaborative. Monthly financial and data reports from funded agencies were also used to identify funding opportunities.

At the same time, the City is currently leading the participatory development of a Coordinated Homelessness Serving System in Hamilton together with an extended project team that includes community experts. Current system gaps that impact the Housing and Homelessness Action Plan strategies and priorities of the 2014-2019 Community Plan are regularly highlighted through this process by management, staff and clients of service agencies throughout the sector.

In February 2017, Council put forth a motion asking the Mayor to correspond with federal and provincial orders of government requesting that they adequately fund the City of Hamilton to deliver homelessness programs and services. The motion noted the effectiveness of Housing First in reducing chronic homelessness in Hamilton and the resource limitations that prevent the existing Housing First programs from adequately serving all qualifying individuals in the community. The letter from the Mayor to the Province requested an annual funding enhancement in the amount of \$3,000,000 over and above Hamilton's current allocation through the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI) program.

Staff developed options for the Year 1 and 2 HFG Take Up Plan in accordance with the priorities highlighted through the mechanisms above and the HFG program guidelines.

It is important to note that the Housing Services Division is also planning for future iterations of Federal and Provincial homelessness funding programs such as the Federal Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) and the Provincial CHPI program.

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The next funding iterations for these programs will take effect April 1, 2019. It is important that HFG align with these two funding streams, through a combined CFA, to achieve the goal of ending chronic homelessness and the goals outlined in Hamilton's 10 year housing and homelessness action plan.

Staff held focus group discussions with Housing First providers and women's homelessness serving agencies to consult on, and validate, the implementation options for Years 1 and 2, as well as the approach for allocating funding in Year 3.

To assist with the review of funding priorities for HFG, Housing Services Division consulted with the Homelessness Funding Implementation Group (HFIG). The HFIG is the advisory group for homelessness funding that provides funding recommendations, ongoing advice and a review of project outcomes. The group consists of eleven members who have a range of professional and personal experiences related to homeless issues. Representation includes; landlords, health/mental health sector, criminal justice sector, the Urban Indigenous Community, and people with lived experience. All members are volunteers and represent their respective sector.

Hamilton's Aboriginal Community Advisory Board provided a letter of support for an Indigenous funding allocation for HFG.

#### **HFG Funding Recommendations:**

The priority areas for HFG funding identified through planning exercises and endorsed by the community are:

- enhancements to Housing First supports; and,
- enhanced supports for people experiencing homelessness who do not meet the criteria for federal Housing First programs, such as Rapid Re-housing support.

To fulfill provincial requirements, for Fiscal Years 2017/18 and 2018/19, the City prioritized the initiatives in the EOI application that align directly with the expected outcomes of HFG and can be delivered through enhancements to existing programs for which there are agreements already in place.

Existing programs that were most aligned with these criteria and HFG Program Guidelines were recommended for HFG funding for fiscal years 2017/18 and 2018/19 on a temporary basis. The recommendation for the 2019/20 fiscal year and on a go forward basis from then is to reset all the homelessness funding (HFG, CHPI and HPS) through a combined CFA. The General Manager of Community and Emergency Services approved these recommendations based on Council approved delegated authority (Report CES17042(a)).

A list of the approved projects is found in Appendix A of Report CES17042(b)).

**Appendices and Schedules Attached**

Appendix A to Report CES17042(b): Home for Good Local Funding Allocations