



Hamilton

INFORMATION REPORT

TO:	Chair and Members Emergency and Community Services Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	December 5, 2019
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Residential Care Facilities Subsidy Program Review (HSC19064) (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
PREPARED BY:	Rob Mastroianni (905) 546-2424 Ext. 8035
SUBMITTED BY:	Edward John Director, Housing Services Healthy and Safe Communities Department
SIGNATURE:	

COUNCIL DIRECTION

Emergency and Community Services Committee at its meeting of April 8, 2018 received Report HSC18015, which informed that a review of the Residential Care Facility (RCF) Subsidy Program would be completed, and an update provided to Committee.

INFORMATION

The Residential Care Facilities (RCF) Subsidy Program, previously known as the Domiciliary Hostel Subsidy Program, is administered by the City of Hamilton and subsidizes the cost of accommodation, meals, supervision and assistance with activities of daily living for an average of 780 residents living in 52 RCFs. Residents include people with mental health issues, developmental disabilities, acquired brain injuries, histories of homelessness and senior adults. As a form of housing with supports, RCFs are an important part of Hamilton's housing continuum and provide an option for people who may require supports along with permanent housing. There are approximately 90 RCF's licensed to operate through the City's Licensing & By-Law Services Division, with inspections done by Public Health Services and the Hamilton Fire Department, however only 52 of these homes are contracted for subsidy through the Housing Services Division.

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The City of Hamilton pays the contracted Owner/Operator of the facility on a per diem basis. Residents of RCFs contribute to the cost of the service according to their income and the City provides the balance of the cost through the RCF Subsidy Program, using 100% Provincial Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI) funding.

In March 2017, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) released the Supportive Housing Policy Framework and Best Practice Guide to help guide both provincial and local program improvements in Housing with Related Supports through CHPI. Supportive housing programs such as RCFs are included within this service category. The Standards Framework seeks to ensure that Municipal Service Managers have measures in place to mitigate risk and ensure a minimum level of quality in the programs funded under the CHPI Housing with Related Supports category. Within this framework, service managers are encouraged to design housing with supports programs and services that move away from custodial models, to approaches that are recovery-orientated and provide access to supports and services that foster independence and social inclusion.

Systems framework

Over the past several months, the RCF Subsidy Program review was undertaken to assess program fidelity to provincial standards and determine the degree to which RCF's are a solution to homelessness in Hamilton. The goal was also to identify areas for continuous local improvement for service planning and delivery to enhance tenant quality of life within the context of a locally coordinated housing system that values housing-based outcomes toward ending homelessness. At the same time, the review concentrated on identifying strategic enhancements and revisions to align with the CHPI program guidelines and evidence informed practices.

Currently, RCFs admit residents through a variety of intake streams, such as direct referrals, community agencies, health care and other institutions. Given the CHPI funding mandate of ending homelessness, the RCF intake process must be re-aligned to ensure subsidized spaces are accessible to those experiencing a homeless crisis. The system must be more closely aligned with funding mandates and support the City's overall goal of ending chronic homelessness.

It is important to note that this review is specific to the RCF Subsidy program operated within the 52 contracted RCFs. The City of Hamilton, through Licensing & By-Law Services and Public Health Services, license and inspect a total of 90 RCFs for compliance to Schedule 20 of the Licensing By-Law. In the coming months, these two Divisions will be completing a separate review of Schedule 20.

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Completed Activities

Several activities were completed to evaluate comprehensive performance measurement and to identify areas of enhancement.

- Review of RCF program data and documents: this included annual reports, service agreements, contract monitoring assessment, and policies and procedures. These identified the effectiveness of meeting funder expectations and opportunities to enhance database management;
- RCF Operator interviews: an online survey was circulated to gather information on operational practices and challenges, policies & procedures, and housing services & activities;
- RCF Community Partner Interviews: Community partners that work closely with the RCF programs had an opportunity to provide feedback on the performance of the RCFs, identifying areas of strength as well as opportunities for revisions/enhancements;
- RCF Staff Survey: RCF staff completed individual & anonymous surveys to examine beliefs that impact service orientation as well as gather feedback on activities, practices and approaches used to support RCF residents;
- RCF Tenant Survey: using an anonymous survey, residents were provided an opportunity to rate how their quality of life is impacted by the supports they receive at the RCF, including housing stability and wellness.

Key Themes

Throughout the RCF Subsidy Program Review, key themes emerged through the various forms of consultation and engagement.

- Of those surveyed, residents conveyed positive experiences in relation to their residency and supports provided through the RCF;
- RCF operators and staff surveys identified concerns around delivery of service to assist in resident independence, as well as a need for more external and community-based case management supports for residents. There was also a shared concern around the level of investment directed to the RCFs;
- The current model of RCFs is rooted in historical context and despite updates and enhancements over the years to local standards of practice, the RCF system remains disconnected from the broader homelessness serving system;

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- The relatively large scale of the RCF system in Hamilton is challenging and presents logistical challenges in ensuring that a common vision and values positioning guides service through all contracted homes;
- Concerns around current investment levels provided to RCFs requires further investigation. This includes whether a consistent per diem funding model for all contracted beds in the RCF system is the most appropriate and effective method of subsidy.

Recommendations

Several recommendations emerged to address the key themes noted above. Some recommendations can be applied to the RCF Subsidy Program as it currently functions however some will need to be addressed as part of an ongoing coordinated and strategic effort to enhance investment and program standards in the area of Housing with Related Supports. They are summarized below, including timing indicators.

Short Term Recommendations (planning and development of long-term vision of housing with related supports program):

- Track, monitor, and regularly report on inflow into RCFs;
- Utilization of a common assessment tool to 'right match' individuals with appropriate supports;
- Explore raising the Personal Needs Allowance (PNA) of residents;
- Develop a 'catalogue' of RCFs that would be beneficial for potential residents and or community partners connecting individuals to RCF supports;
- Conduct a more comprehensive demographic analysis of who the RCF Subsidy program supports and what spaces are available in homes for specific populations;
- Shared principles and values be developed that articulate the shared ethics of the system of care around Housing with Related Supports;
- Conduct a re-branding exercise to ensure shared clarity and understanding around program vision, principles, values, and key outcomes.

Intermediate Term Recommendations (programmatic changes to link to the City of Hamilton's long-term vision for Housing with Related Supports):

- Development of key reporting indicators and metrics to measure impacts and effectiveness of RCF supports;
- Standard operating procedures/standards of care be enhanced and/or established for RCF operations;

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- Integrate training and coaching opportunities into RCF staff teams on a regular basis that reflect opportunities existing in Hamilton's homelessness serving system;
- Explore formalized partnerships with community service providers in other sectors;
- Explore the creation of a Quality Assurance Framework to measures accountability regarding compliance with standard operating procedures.

Long Term Recommendations (full implementation of program vision):

- Ensure reporting reflects community standards and ensure that Hamilton can demonstrate impact, effectiveness, and value of the investment;
- Development of a resident engagement strategy.

Staff will continue to work collaboratively with RCF Operators to implement the recommendations and support the evolution of the Housing with Related Supports model, with the goal of expanding housing and support options for people at risk of or experiencing homelessness.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

None

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