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Minister of
Families, Children and
Social Development



Ministre de
la Famille, des Enfants et
du Développement social

Ottawa, Canada K1A 0J9

His Worship Fred Eisenberger
Mayor
City of Hamilton
71 Main Street W
2nd floor
Hamilton ON L8P 4Y5

SEP 10 2020

Dear Mayor Eisenberger,

Thank you for your letter of July 16, 2020, concerning homelessness funding for Hamilton during the COVID-19 pandemic. I regret the delay in replying.

I appreciate your taking the time to write about this important matter. The Government of Canada is concerned about homelessness and recognizes that it has an impact on every community in Canada. In 2018, an estimated 25,216 people across 61 communities were experiencing absolute homelessness in shelters or were living in unsheltered locations on a given night. This is why the Government of Canada committed \$2.2 billion to tackle homelessness across the country.

Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy launched on April 1, 2019. First announced in 2018, Reaching Home replaced the Homelessness Partnering Strategy and will continue to support communities' efforts to prevent and reduce homelessness in Canada. Reaching Home supports the goals of the National Housing Strategy, especially the reduction, by 50 percent, of chronic homelessness nationally by 2027–2028.

As you may know, on March 18, 2020, the Prime Minister, the Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, announced that the Government of Canada would provide an additional \$157.5 million through the Reaching Home program, and as part of its COVID-19 Economic Response Plan, to address the needs of Canadians experiencing homelessness. The majority of this funding has already flowed to communities. Investments were focused in larger urban centres, including Hamilton, where the risk of the virus spreading was highest, while ensuring sufficient funding was available to invest in rural and remote communities.

Approximately \$22.8 million was reserved for communities with emerging or exacerbated needs. To allocate this funding, Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) officials

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launched a process that gave all current Reaching Home funding recipients the opportunity to request additional funding. A decision on the allocation of the \$22.8 million in reserved funding has been made and the results are being shared with communities. You may be pleased to know that the City of Hamilton was successful in this process. Please see below a table detailing total allocations for Hamilton.

Hamilton							
	Designated Communities (City of Hamilton)			Indigenous Homelessness (Coalition of Hamilton Indigenous Leadership)			
	Base	COVID-19 Response	Sub-Total	Base	COVID-19 Response	Sub-Total	Total
2020–2021	\$5,614,508	\$2,651,550	\$8,266,058	\$675,526	\$373,719	\$1,049,245	\$9,315,303

The Government has been working to put in place supports for all Canadians facing difficulties during the COVID-19 crisis and has created the Emergency Community Support Fund (ECSF), a \$350 million investment to support organizations that deliver essential services to vulnerable populations in Canada. ESDC is working with three national organizations that have vast networks and deep reach across the country and that are sensitive to local issues and well placed to evaluate local needs. The United Way Centraide Canada, the Canadian Red Cross and Community Foundations of Canada are national organizations already in communities in need, funding community-based charities and non-profit organizations quickly and efficiently. ESDC is working with these national organizations to ensure that project resources are efficiently and equitably redistributed across Canada to local organizations that deliver essential services to vulnerable populations. Eligible activities include increasing volunteer-based home deliveries of groceries and medications. As of May 19, 2020, community-based organizations from across the country can apply for funding to support a variety of activities that address a pressing social inclusion or well-being need caused by COVID-19.

As of July 21, 2020, the ECSF funded 94 community-based projects within the City of Hamilton, totalling close to \$2.9 million in financial supports. These are early results, so these amounts could grow in the coming weeks.

You may also be pleased to know that on July 16, 2020, the Government of Canada announced an investment of more than \$19 billion to help provinces and territories safely restart their economies through the Safe Restart Agreement. Funding will be cost-matched by provinces and

territories with investments made this fiscal year and will address up to seven priority areas as determined by the province or territory. One potential priority area that may be of particular interest to you is investments in health care to respond to the pandemic, including support for Canadians experiencing challenges with substance use, mental health issues, or homelessness. For more information about the Safe Restart Agreement in Ontario, please visit <https://news.ontario.ca/opo/en/2020/07/historic-agreement-delivers-up-to-4-billion-to-support-municipalities-and-transit.html>.

In terms of broader efforts on homelessness, we have been working closely with the Public Health Agency of Canada and Health Canada to provide guidance on COVID-19 prevention and mitigation measures for the homeless population. Health Canada has assured us that they understand the importance of addressing the specific needs of the homeless population.

The Public Health Agency of Canada has issued guidance for the homeless-serving sector, including overnight emergency shelters, day shelters, and meal service providers. We have communicated these measures to community representatives, including from the City of Hamilton and the Coalition of Hamilton Indigenous Leadership. To find more information on this topic, please visit www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/guidance-documents/homelessness.html.

I look forward to our continued collaboration as we work to support those who are experiencing homelessness in Hamilton or at risk of doing so, and the organizations that serve them.

Thank you for writing, and please accept my best wishes.

Yours sincerely,



The Honourable Ahmed Hussen, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Families, Children and Social Development