



CITY OF HAMILTON
HEALTHY AND SAFE COMMUNITIES DEPARTMENT
Housing Services Division

TO:	Chair and Members Emergency and Community Services Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	February 4, 2021
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) Mental Health and Addictions Funding (HSC21006) (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
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SUBMITTED BY:	Edward John Director, Housing Services Division Healthy and Safe Communities Department
SIGNATURE:	

RECOMMENDATION

That the General Manager of the Healthy and Safe Communities Department, or their designate, be authorized and directed to enter into and execute an Agreement with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) to administer Mental Health and Addictions Funding to a maximum amount of \$302,208 and any agreements with Community Services Provider(s) delivered in alignment with Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI) Program Guidelines, as well as any ancillary agreements, contracts, extensions and documents required to give effect thereto in a form satisfactory to the City Solicitor.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On December 10, 2020, the Provincial Government announced an additional investment of \$10 M aimed at supporting a range of mental health and/or addictions-related supports and services across the province. The City of Hamilton's funding allocation under Ontario's Mental Health and Addictions Funding is \$302,208. All funding must be spent by March 31, 2021.

This one-time Mental Health and Addictions Funding for 2020-21 is intended to help address the pandemic needs of vulnerable people living with mental health and/or

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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.

addictions issues and may be used for eligible operating activities. Given the pressing need to help support vulnerable residents living with mental health and/or addictions issues during the pandemic, all funding must be spent by March 31, 2021.

Hamilton has coordinated closely with critical community partners in health and social services to plan for the risk of infection, spread or outbreak of COVID-19. This additional investment will be prioritized to further opportunities to better support individuals requiring addictions supports in emergency shelter and/or hotel settings, while also assisting to support vulnerable community members who are required to self-isolate for 14 days due to COVID positivity or exposure on a case by case basis as directed by Public Health. These additional investments will contribute to interventions aimed at ensuring that necessary supports are available in order to allow individuals to safely shelter and/or isolate in place and receive additional housing-focused supports. To this end, Mental Health and Addictions Funding will be prioritized in the following areas:

- Addictions support at shelter hotels specifically and the emergency shelter system more broadly: prioritized to support hotel admissions and stays. Addictions support increases opportunities for intensive case managers to have housing-focused discussions, paving the way to increased outflow and permanent housing solutions; and/or,
- Isolation Units: to offset costs associated with providing isolation units for people experiencing homelessness who are awaiting test results or have been identified as contacts of positive cases. This includes onsite support including harm reduction, food, and case management.

Alternatives for Consideration – Not Applicable

FINANCIAL – STAFFING – LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial: COVID costs are projected to total \$28.02 M by March 31, 2021. Housing Services Division will complete a business case by mid-February 2021 to demonstrate the use of the \$302K in MMAH funding to be spent by March 31, 2021, in accordance with the guidelines. The proposed investment in addictions support at shelter hotels and emergency shelters represents a one-time investment made possible through this MMAH funding allocation.

Ongoing costs beyond March 31, 2021 for isolation units for people experiencing homelessness who are awaiting test results or have been identified as contacts of positive cases will need to be addressed by subsequent funding given that all funds provided to date must be utilized by March 31, 2021.

If these funds are not used as currently intended, they can address any shortfall reported in Report HSC20036(a).

Staffing: N/A

Legal: N/A

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The City of Hamilton received a base funding amount of \$19,455,174 from the Provincial Government's Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI) for the 2020-2021 fiscal year. CHPI is a 100% provincially funded outcomes-based program that aims to prevent and end homelessness by improving access to adequate, suitable, and affordable housing and homelessness services for people experiencing homelessness and for people at-risk of homelessness. Housing Services Division brokers many of these services through community partners.

On April 1, 2020, the City of Hamilton received a funding allocation in the amount of \$6,880,800 under the provincial Social Services Relief Fund (SSRF) for 2020-2021 to support the needs of the most vulnerable in our communities, including people who are homeless or at-risk of becoming homeless, during the COVID-19 crisis. The additional funding was to complement Hamilton's CHPI base funding.

On July 2, 2020, the province announced an additional allocation of \$11,323,812 in 2020-21 for the City of Hamilton to support ongoing challenges brought on by COVID-19 through the Social Services Relief Fund Phase 2 (SSRF2). The province communicated that a portion of the total SSRF2 funds would be held back to help communities disproportionately impacted by the effects of COVID-19.

On December 15, 2020, the City of Hamilton received an additional \$6,395,900 in SSRF2 funding in 2020-21. The Ministry held back these funds from SSRF2 and they now must be utilized by March 31, 2021 for operating expenses and by December 31, 2021 for capital expenses.

In addition to the COVID relief Provincial funding, the City has received Federal funding through Reaching Homes (RH) for a total of \$8,303,850 in fiscal 2020-21.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND LEGISLATED REQUIREMENTS

Similar to the province's SSRF, the allocation under the Mental Health and Addictions Funding will flow through Hamilton's CHPI agreement. As of April 1, 2020, the City of Hamilton entered into a Service Agreement with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH). This Service Agreement applies to all CHPI funding, including Hamilton's allocation under the Mental Health and Addictions Funding, and will require the City of Hamilton to adhere to the requirements and directives prescribed through

CHPI, including amendments to this agreement outlined by the MMAH regarding this allocation.

RELEVANT CONSULTATION

Quick distribution of COVID-19 emergency response funding is critical to protect those experiencing homelessness or housing instability and the workers supporting them. On March 27, 2020, the Housing Services Division received endorsement from the Community Advisory Board for the investment of Federal and Provincial COVID-19 funds in accordance with the coordination provided by the City of Hamilton's Emergency Operations Committee and information provided by the Indigenous Community and community partners. The Housing Services Division committed to reporting back to the Community Advisory Board with details on the details of investments made.

On an ongoing basis through the pandemic, the City has continued to consult regularly with the sector planning tables including the Women's Housing Planning Collaborative, the Men's Emergency Services Coordination Committee, as well as an ad hoc sector group representing community partners in the health and housing sector. These groups have advised on issues relating to shelter capacity, permanent housing interventions, eviction prevention, and responses that allow for maximizing physical distancing including the adaptation of existing congregate spaces.

The City has also maintained direct contact with Indigenous partners through the Indigenous Community Entity, working to ensure that our response is in alignment with the unique needs present within Hamilton's Urban Indigenous population.

ANALYSIS AND RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

The Provincial Mental Health and Addiction Funding is intended to help address the pandemic needs of populations living with mental health and/or addictions issues. Eligible funding for mental health and/or addictions supports include but are not limited to:

- mental health/illness and substance use supports and services, supports related to recovery (e.g. hiring mental health and addictions workers);
- harm reduction and substance use assessment, support, treatment and withdrawal services;
- crisis intervention and prevention services;
- dual diagnosis and fetal alcohol supports;
- medication assistance and medical care;
- providing people with short-term mental health and addictions housing assistance (e.g. rent supplement or housing allowance) and mental health and addictions supports up to March 31, 2021); and,

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- purchase of technology/equipment needed to provide people with virtual mental health and/or addictions supports.

Through consultation and community feedback from stakeholders, the need for increased on-site addictions supports has been raised as an ongoing priority in the expanded emergency sheltering response through use of hotels. Prior to the availability of the Mental Health and Addictions Funding through the Province there was no other funding directly available to support this type of intervention in this setting. By utilizing this newly available funding to increase on-site addictions supports, the goal is to support hotel admissions and stays. These expanded supports will allow for immediate needs of residents to be met in order to safely shelter in place, while also allowing for an increased opportunity for Intensive Case Management supports to work toward permanent housing solutions.

The City is concurrently engaged in an Intensive Supports Pilot in partnership with St. Joseph's Healthcare Hamilton and the Canadian Mental Health Association Hamilton to stabilize the housing of 15-20 individuals experiencing chronic homelessness with high acuity mental illness and/or substance use disorder. The pilot will integrate mobile peer support, clinical health and addictions services, and existing City-funded Intensive Case Management program support. The pilot is supported with funding through the health partners.

Helping people experiencing homelessness to isolate when they are COVID-19 positive or are identified as a contact is critical to reducing the spread of COVID-19 in the community. An Isolation Centre has been open since March for people experiencing homelessness who are COVID-19 positive. There has, however, been no consistent solution for people who are identified as contacts of positive cases. Eight social housing units have been identified to meet this need. The funding will help furnish the apartments and fund the support services required to ensure people are able to remain isolated for the full 14 days. A significant focus for the supports are to ensure a client's mental health and addictions do not prevent them from completing the full course of their isolation.

Authorization of the General Manager of Healthy and Safe Communities, or their designate, to enter into and execute an Agreement with MMAH to administer Mental Health and Addictions Funding is recommended to facilitate the acceptance and quick distribution of funding, which is critical to Hamilton's ongoing COVID-19 response related to housing and support services.

ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION

None

ALIGNMENT TO THE 2016 – 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN

Healthy and Safe Communities

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

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

Appendix “A” to Report HSC21006: MMAH Mental Health and Addictions Funding Letter