



CITY OF HAMILTON
HEALTHY AND SAFE COMMUNITIES DEPARTMENT
Housing Services Division

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| TO: | Chair and Members Emergency and Community Services Committee |
| COMMITTEE DATE: | September 9, 2021 |
| SUBJECT/REPORT NO: | Municipal Affairs and Housing Social Services Relief Fund Phase 4 and Canada-Ontario Community Housing Initiative (HSC20036(b)) (City Wide) |
| WARD(S) AFFECTED: | City Wide |
| PREPARED BY: | Rob Mastroianni (905) 546-2424 Ext. 8035 Nadia Zelisko (905) 546-2424 Ext. 2548 Brian Kreps (905) 546-2424 Ext. 1782 |
| SUBMITTED BY: | Edward John Director, Housing Services Division Healthy and Safe Communities Department |
| SIGNATURE: | |

RECOMMENDATION(S)

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 the additional Social Services Relief Fund Phase 4 (SSRF4) allocation to a maximum amount of \$13,823,000 and Canada-Ontario Community Housing Initiative (COCHI) allocation to a maximum amount of \$1,028,000 and any agreements with Community Services Provider(s), 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 August 16, 2021, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) announced that the City of Hamilton is to receive an additional SSRF4 funding allocation of \$13,823,000 for the 2021-22 fiscal year to support challenges brought on by COVID-19, as well as an additional funding allocation for COCHI of \$1,028,000 for the 2021-22

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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.

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fiscal year to support community housing (attached as Appendix “A” to Report HSC20036(b)).

Under SSRF4, the fourth and final phase of the province’s Social Services Relief Fund, funds are intended to complement initial allocations provided through the MMAH SSRF, SSRF2, SSRF2 Holdback and SSRF3 as part of the provincial government’s COVID-19 response plan. The City of Hamilton received:

- \$6,880,800 through the SSRF in April 2020,
- \$11,323,812 through the SSRF2 in July 2020,
- \$6,395,900 through the SSRF2 Holdback in December 2020, and
- \$12,301,538 through SSRF3 in March 2021.

COCHI is intended to support community housing providers across Ontario, including the state of repair of the legacy social housing stock. This funding is in addition to Hamilton’s 2021-22 COCHI allocation of \$2,784,784 that was communicated on May 6, 2021, bringing the total 2021-22 funding for COCHI to \$3,812,784.

Hamilton continues to coordinate closely with critical community partners in health and social services to plan for the risk of infection, spread or outbreak of COVID-19. The SSRF4 funding will further support the continuation of Hamilton’s COVID-19 emergency supports, as well as transition planning through post-COVID recovery to a more responsive, resilient, sustainable and housing-focused homeless-serving system in alignment with the outcomes and strategies within Hamilton’s Housing and Homelessness Action Plan.

Alternatives for Consideration – Not Applicable

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

As of March 31, 2021, \$24.6 M of SSRF funding was received with \$23.4 M being committed by the end of the fiscal year. \$1.2 M was returned to the Province as eligible projects could not be identified within the time constraints of the funding guidelines. As of March 31, 2022, projected COVID operating costs will total \$30.3 M with \$26.1 M of the projected costs funded by SSRF according to the table below.

Housing Services Division will be completing a business case for the Ministry to demonstrate the use of \$13.8 M in SSRF4 additional funding by the utilization deadlines of March 31, 2022 for operating and December 31, 2023 for capital expenses, in accordance with the guidelines. A portion of the SSRF4 funding is expected to cover additional costs projected to December 2021 and reduce the pressure on the levy for costs projected between January to March 2022 within Report HSC20020(c). Remaining SSRF4 available funds are expected to be used for Capital. The Housing

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Services Division will continue to monitor the projected costs to ensure 100% funding is maximized by March 2022.

| SSRF Funding Allocations | FY 2020-21 | FY 2021-22 |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| SSRF1 | 6,880,800 | |
| SSRF2 | 11,323,812 | |
| SSRF2-HB | 6,395,900 | |
| SSRF3 | | 12,301,538 |
| SSRF4 | | 13,823,000 |
| SSRF Funding Received | 24,600,512 | 26,124,538 |
| Committed Costs | 23,358,494 | 26,124,538 |
| Returned to the Province | 1,242,018 | - |

The additional funding of \$1.028 M for Canada Ontario Community Housing Initiative will bring the total allocation for 2021-22 to \$3,812,784. Housing Services Division will be completing a business case for the Ministry to demonstrate the use of \$1.028 M in COCHI additional funding.

STAFFING IMPLICATIONS – N/A

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS – N/A

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The City of Hamilton received a base funding amount of \$2,784,784 from the Canada-Ontario Community Housing Initiative (COCHI) for the 2020-2021 fiscal year. COCHI is a key program introduced under Ontario's Community Housing Renewal Strategy in 2019, and funding is delivered through the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC)-Ontario Bilateral Agreement under the National Housing Strategy.

The City of Hamilton received a base funding amount of \$19,645,911 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.

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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 intended 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 must be utilized by March 31, 2021 for operating expenses and December 31, 2021 for capital expenses.

On March 10, 2021, the City of Hamilton received a funding allocation of \$12,301,538 under the provincial Social Services Relief Fund Phase 3 (SSRF3). The additional allocation of one-time operating funding was implemented to mitigate the continued impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the homelessness sector.

On June 3, 2021, the Emergency and Community Services Committee approved recommendations outlined in Report HSC20020(c) Adaptation and Transformation of Services for People Experiencing Homelessness Update 3.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND LEGISLATED REQUIREMENTS

None

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 Centre 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 investments made.

Housing Services Division will continue to communicate and engage with the Coalition of Hamilton Indigenous Leadership, partner organizations and sector planning tables to look for ongoing permanent solutions to address system pressures.

Regarding Hamilton's approach to delivery of COCHI and the allocation of the funding between sub-programs, Housing Services Division will communicate and liaise with the Housing and Homelessness Planning Group and the Housing and Homelessness Advisory Committee.

ANALYSIS AND RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

The SSRF4 supports provincial CHPI investments in Hamilton to connect individuals experiencing homelessness to permanent housing with supports and to keep individuals and staff in the homelessness sector safe during COVID-19.

The objectives of SSRF4 are to: mitigate ongoing risk for vulnerable people, especially in congregate care settings; encourage longer-term housing-based solutions to homelessness post-COVID-19; enhance rent assistance provided to households in rent arrears due to COVID-19; and to ensure an orderly wind-down of SSRF-funded supports prior to program expiry on March 31, 2022.

Eligible operating and capital expenses under SSRF4 include but are not limited to:

- continued use of motels or hotels as isolation centres or to support social distancing;
- rental assistance such as funding for rent arrears and short-term housing allowances;
- transportation costs;
- food and supplies;
- enhanced cleaning services;
- non-medical staffing requirements (e.g., enhanced outreach services);
- personal protective equipment; and,
- minor retrofits, alterations and repairs under \$50,000.

More broadly, this funding could also be used towards initiatives delivered through local service agencies like:

- rent bank and emergency energy funds;
- food banks and grocery gift cards;
- community outreach to support vulnerable populations in self-isolation;
- transportation for low-income individuals to get to and from medical appointments; and,
- funding administration needs, including staffing.

All eligible operating expenses must be spent by March 31, 2022. Service Managers must consider how enhanced supports and services offered through the SSRF will be phased out or continued through other funding sources as the SSRF Phase 4 ends on March 31, 2022. Funding under the SSRF Phase 4 capital components must be committed by December 31, 2021 and must be completed by March 31, 2023.

SSRF4 funding will largely address existing commitments made to date up until March 31, 2022, as outlined in Report HSC20020(c) Adaptation and Transformation of Services for People Experiencing Homelessness Update 3, and will contribute to ensuring an orderly wind-down of SSRF-funded supports prior to program expiry and a transition to a more responsive, resilient, sustainable and housing-focused homeless-serving system in alignment with the outcomes and strategies within Hamilton's Housing and Homelessness Action Plan. Items that SSRF4 will continue to address include: additional shelter capacity within hotel overflow; enhancements to the women's emergency shelter system; continuation of COVID-19 related supports for the homeless-serving system; expansion of drop-in services; continuation of operation of COVID-19 isolation services for people experiencing homelessness, etc.

Enhancements to COCHI will continue to provide an opportunity for the City of Hamilton and housing providers to address the challenges associated with projects reaching the end of their operating agreements and/or mortgage maturity. Significant challenges remain in terms of maintaining this important supply of community housing and the additional COCHI allocation will continue to support the needs identified in Hamilton's Housing and Homelessness Action Plan.

Authorization of the General Manager of the Healthy and Safe Communities Department, or their designate, to enter into and execute an agreement with the MMAH for SSRF4 and COCHI is recommended to facilitate the acceptance and quick distribution of funding from the MMAH, which is critical to Hamilton's COVID-19 ongoing response related to housing and emergency shelter 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 (HSC20036(b)): MMAH SSRF Phase 4 and additional COCHI
Allocation Letter