



CITY OF HAMILTON
HEALTHY AND SAFE COMMUNITIES DEPARTMENT
Housing Services Division

TO:	Chair and Members Emergency and Community Services Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	November 4, 2021
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Voluntary Safe Isolation Space Program Funding (HSC21042) (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
PREPARED BY:	Brian Kreps (905) 546-2424 Ext. 1782 Mike Jones (905) 546-2424 Ext. 3824
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 a Contribution Agreement with the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) to administer Voluntary Safe Isolation Space Program (VSISP) allocation to a maximum amount of \$210,928, 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

In February 2021, the City of Hamilton contracted with a local hotel to provide isolation services for households who have a residence but are unable to isolate in-place. Support was also offered to shelter staff and immigrants to Canada who were sponsored by local Hamilton agencies.

Fourteen rooms were reserved for this purpose, and referrals to the isolation hotel spaces were received through the Vulnerable Supports team operated by the Healthy and Safe Communities Department. From February 2021 to September 2021, the

OUR Vision: To be the best place to raise a child and age successfully.

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.

SUBJECT: Voluntary Safe Isolation Space Program Funding (HSC21042) (City Wide) - Page 2 of 5

Vulnerable Supports team received a total of 42 referrals from Public Health Services for hotel support. Of those 42 referrals, 19 were approved (12 females, seven males).

Starting April 1, 2021, funding was secured through the Public Health Agency of Canada's (PHAC) Voluntary Safe Isolation Space Program (VSISP). The funding in the amount of \$323,672 was to cover the cost of the hotel spaces and meals for participants from April 1, 2021 to September 30, 2021. Authority to enter into this agreement was provided by the Emergency Operating Centre (EOC). Given lower than anticipated usage, the number of rooms reserved was reduced to three as of July 1, 2021.

Out of concern for a potential increase in demand during the 4th wave of the pandemic, the agreement with PHAC was extended to December 31, 2021 at a revised cost of \$210,928. The reduction in total funding reflected the reduction in beds reserved, and lower than anticipated use.

Alternatives for Consideration – Not Applicable

FINANCIAL – STAFFING – LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial: A funding allocation of \$323,672 was provided to the City from PHAC to cover the cost of hotel spaces and meals for participants from April 1, 2021 to September 30, 2021. The allocation is based upon the following funding formula: 14 hotel rooms reserved daily at an estimated cost of \$1,648 per day, and meals at an estimated cost of \$350 per stay, assuming an average stay of nine days per participant.

Given lower than anticipated usage, the number of rooms reserved was reduced to three as of July 1, 2021. Out of concern for a potential increase in demand during the 4th wave of the pandemic, the agreement with PHAC was extended to December 31, 2021, resulting in a revised program cost of \$210,928.

Original and revised budget allocations are detailed in the following table:

SUBJECT: Voluntary Safe Isolation Space Program Funding (HSC21042) (City Wide) - Page 3 of 5

	Original Budget		Total Budget	Revised Budget		Total Actuals and Forecast	Budget Variance Funds Returned
	Rent	Meal		Rent	Meal		
Apr-21	50,345	3,600	53,945	45,339	366	45,705	8,240
May-21	50,345	3,600	53,945	45,339	2,402	47,741	6,204
Jun-21	50,345	3,600	53,945	43,876	692	44,568	9,377
Total Q1	151,036	10,800	161,836	134,554	3,460	138,014	23,822
Jul-21	50,345	3,600	53,945	9,715	-	9,715	44,230
Aug-21	50,345	3,600	53,945	9,402	41	9,443	44,502
Sep-21*	50,345	3,600	53,945	9,715	3,663	13,378	40,567
Total Q2	151,036	10,800	161,836	28,832	3,704	32,536	129,300
Oct-21*				9,715	3,785	13,500	(13,500)
Nov-21*				9,715	3,663	13,378	(13,378)
Dec-21*				9,715	3,785	13,500	(13,500)
Total Q3	-	-	-	29,145	11,233	40,378	(40,378)
Total	302,072	21,600	323,672	192,531	18,397	210,928	112,744

Staffing: N/A

Legal: N/A

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

On April 1, 2021, the City of Hamilton received a base funding amount of \$323,672 from the Public Health Agency of Canada as part of the Safe Voluntary Isolations Sites Program, to cover the costs of hotel spaces and food for participants from April 1, 2021 to September 30, 2021. Authority to enter the agreement was provided by EOC.

On July 1, 2021, due to limited uptake of the program the number of rooms reserved was reduced to three. To protect against a fourth wave, the program was extended from September 30, 2021 to December 31, 2021, resulting in a revised program cost of \$210,928 for 2021.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND LEGISLATED REQUIREMENTS

None

RELEVANT CONSULTATION

The Housing Services Division continues to participate in regular meetings and consultation with housing and homelessness sector planning tables, as well as an ad hoc sector group representing community partners in the health and housing sector.

There is broad consensus to provide isolation space to assist in reducing the spread of COVID-19 in residential/congregate settings by providing service to people experiencing homelessness and reducing the spread of COVID-19 in homes where it is difficult to isolate due to the home's size or number of inhabitants.

ANALYSIS AND RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

In its role as Service Manager, the City of Hamilton has a legally mandated role to plan, fund, and coordinate services relating to homelessness and affordable housing, including households living in congregate settings, those who may be precariously housed in rooming houses, and those who may be under-housed.

Socio-economic data has shown that individuals from lower-income and densely-populated neighbourhoods have been disproportionately affected by COVID-19 and may have more difficulty safely isolating at home due to factors such as overcrowding and/or resource constraints.

The Voluntary Safe Isolation Space Program was introduced to decrease community transmission of COVID-19 by addressing gaps identified for individuals who are unable to safely self-isolate due to housing conditions.

The objectives of the program are to: increase the availability and accessibility of voluntary isolation site(s); ensure the safety of individuals making use of voluntary isolation site(s); and, support integration of voluntary isolation site(s) into relevant COVID-19 prevention and control efforts, as necessary.

Eligible expenditures are costs directly related to approved projects such as personnel, travel and accommodation, material and supplies, equipment, rent, utilities, and performance measurement/evaluation.

Authorization of the General Manager of the Healthy and Safe Communities Department, or their designate, to enter into and execute an Agreement with Public Health Agency of Canada is recommended to address ongoing, disproportionate impacts of COVID-19 on low-income and densely-populated neighbourhoods by providing a suitable isolation space and limiting community spread.

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

None