



REPORT TO: Co-Chairs and Members of Public Health and Social Services Committee

SUBJECT: Niagara's Homelessness Service System Request For Proposal

RECOMMENDATION

That this Committee recommends to Regional Council that this report be received for information.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Community Services, on behalf of the Niagara Region, is the Homelessness Services System Manager in Niagara and is responsible for coordinating and managing the system of homelessness services.
- Utilizing Federal (Homelessness Partnering Strategy – HPS), Provincial (Consolidated Homelessness Prevention Program – CHPP) and local funding the system engages 21 agencies, and funds 34 projects to provide supports in four service areas (Outreach, Emergency Hostels, Prevention and Supported Transitional Housing) in each of Niagara's 12 municipalities.
- The original Homelessness Community Service Plan was created in 2006 following a series of community consultations which resulted in six strategic imperatives that guided the efforts of staff and community in the development of homelessness services in Niagara.
- In order to ensure that the system continues to reflect the need, Community Services undertook a review of the original plan working with the Niagara Homelessness Advisory Committee (NHAC) to assess service gaps and needed system improvements.
- The renewed plan sets out four priorities; Supported Transitional Housing, Prevention, Outreach and Data Collection.
- A Request For Proposal (RFP) is being used to renew funding for projects that reflect the new community priorities.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications directly associated with this report. Successful proponents of the RFP will be funded using 100% Federal (HPS \$1,188,584) and 100% Provincial (CHPP \$1,282,102) funds for a total allocation of \$2,470,686. The contract period is from October 1, 2011 to March 31, 2014.

PURPOSE

This report has been prepared to inform Committee and Council of status of the funded Niagara Homelessness Service System and activities related to the RFP to renew system funding.

BACKGROUND

Community Services is the Service System Manager responsible for coordinating and managing the system of homelessness support services in Niagara and works with the Niagara Homelessness Advisory Committee (NHAC) to develop a Community Plan that reflects local homelessness issues and priorities.

The NHAC consists of representatives from municipalities in Niagara, local service providers and client groups, members in the private sector, Aboriginal peoples and federal and provincial representation.

Community Services utilizes a RFP process to allocate funding to service providers who respond to the identified priorities (Supported Transitional Housing, Prevention and Outreach) and signs purchase of service agreements with successful proponents to ensure homelessness services are available in each of Niagara's communities.

The NHAC ensures that funding is allocated to the Community Plan priorities; a subgroup of this committee reviews proposals and recommends projects for funding to Community Services.

REPORT

The NHAC, endorsed Niagara's Homelessness Plan and the four service priorities and made recommendations for investment as noted below.

Community Priority	Objective	% of allotment
Supported Transitional Housing	Increase the number of supported transitional units/beds in Niagara	61%
Prevention	Expand prevention services so that all Niagara residents have equal access to these services.	21%
Outreach	Expand outreach services so that all Niagara residents have equal access to these services.	16%
Data Collection	Implement HIFIS across the Niagara Region for all relevant agencies that provide homelessness services to those who are homeless or at-risk of becoming homeless.	2%

The funding recommendations reinforce the shift from an emergency response to one of homelessness prevention which has seen a 9% reduction in emergency shelter use in Niagara over the last two years.

The RFP process is expected to run from May to July 2011 and contracts for successful proponents will take effect October 1, 2011 and run until March 31, 2014.

Submitted by:

Approved by:

Cathy Cousins, CA
Acting Commissioner, Community Services

Mike Trojan
Chief Administrative Officer

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