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COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND INVESTMENT FUND 2007 ANNUAL ACTIVITY REPORT

The Community Services and Housing Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendation contained in the following report, March 13, 2008, from the Commissioner of Community and Health Services:

1. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that:

1. Council receive this report for information.

2. PURPOSE

This report provides an update on the activities and results of the 2007 Community Development and Investment Fund (CDIF).

3. BACKGROUND

On April 18, 2002, Regional Council approved the CDIF Strategy which became effective with the 2003 Business Planning cycle. Under the CDIF Strategy, the Department manages funds from provincial and municipal initiatives to purchase community services and programs for the residents of York Region. These funds include the National Child Benefit, the Consolidated Homelessness Prevention Program and Municipal Purchase of Service funds.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

4.1 FORTY PROJECTS RECEIVED CDIF FUNDING IN 2007

Project selection began in September 2006

The selection of projects for the 2007 CDIF funding cycle began in September 2006 when the Region issued its annual Purchase of Service Request inviting submissions from eligible community agencies. Funding Proposals were evaluated by a CDIF Evaluation Committee comprised of York Region staff and funders from other levels of government and the not-for-profit sector. On December 14, 2006, the recommendations of the Evaluation Committee were approved by Regional Council.

Regional Council also authorized the Commissioner of Community Services, Housing and Health Services to receive and allocate any new or reallocated CDIF funding that become available in-year. This enabled the Region to allocate additional dollars received in-year in a timely and efficient manner.

In all, 40 projects received funding through CDIF in 2007 including both those proposed by the community and those initiated by the Department resulting in a total investment of \$2.4 million. Through CDIF in 2007, community-based programs and services were able to provide important supports to York Region residents. It is estimated that close to 38,000 residents across York Region benefited from the CDIF strategy in 2007. Services were provided to children, youth, families and individuals.

CDIF strategy includes three funding priority areas

All projects that received CDIF funding addressed at least one of three priority areas established for 2007 that included:

- Child and family supports, such as special needs supports, child nutrition and funding for recreation programs for children of low-income families.
- Outreach services to the homeless, programs to prevent homelessness as well as emergency supports for those facing homelessness.
- Employment skill development through training and return-to-work opportunities for Ontario Works participants and low-income residents.

4.2 MONITORING PROJECT RESULTS

Each Purchase of Service contract under CDIF requires agencies to submit regular project reports at various intervals during the term of the contract. Agencies report on specific data regarding the delivery of services, project expenditures and project deliverables.

Further to this, in January 2008, seven community-based projects were selected for on-site reviews. The following criteria were used to select projects for review visits:

- New or innovative projects.
- Projects that were particularly complex.
- Agencies that received regional funding for the first time.
- Projects where in-year monitoring indicated that further evaluation was warranted.

Project visits explore achievements

The three objectives of the review visits are to explore the achievement of project goals and objectives, to identify issues/lessons learned in the implementation of the project and to discuss with the agency unplanned benefits or community development successes yielded by the projects. The project reviews use a standard questionnaire designed to gather information about the agency's implementation of the project. These reviews are

an opportunity for regional staff to gain a better insight into the projects' implementation and accountability, learn from agencies and improve processes for future years. Ongoing community development is also supported through the sharing of effective and successful practices that can be used by other agencies.

4.3 CDIF PROJECTS BENEFIT OUR COMMUNITIES

CDIF funding addressed a wide range of community needs and provided vital support services to the vulnerable residents in our community. A summary of the project activities and services for all CDIF projects is included as *Attachment 1* to this report. Below are some examples of projects and successes in 2007 under each of the three priority funding areas.

Projects that helped families and children

CDIF funded projects that provided assistance to families and children through a range of services designed to build resilience in children who are at risk because of their family circumstances.

- For example, mentoring programs aimed to reduce the effects of child poverty by providing over 678 children from low-income families access to experiences and opportunities that would otherwise be unavailable to them because of financial barriers. One of these programs included children of newcomer families.
- Also, the summer camp programs supported by CDIF provided access to summer recreational programs for children from social housing communities and allowed over 365 children of residents participating in the Ontario Works program to attend summer camp.
- Programs that promote goal setting and community service. The Future Possibilities project provided the opportunity for children from grades 4 – 6 to work with a trained coach to determine a goal and pursue activities that provided benefits to the community. In 2007, 350 children graduated from the program having successfully completed their community service projects.

Projects aimed at helping people who are homelessness and those at-risk of homelessness

These programs provided services and support to those who are homeless and other vulnerable residents using a continuum of supports. Examples of these 2007 programs include:

- The Identification Clinic where project staff worked with 1,200 homeless individuals and families and those with little or no income, helping them obtain personal identification which is often needed to access necessary services such as health care,

income supports, employment supports, education, housing, food banks, opening a bank account and other services.

- A Community Enhancement (Winter Needs) project which provided assistance to 12 community agencies, allowing them to acquire emergency supplies and equipment in order to meet the needs of their homeless and at risk clients. The goal of the initiative continues to be the enhancement of services and the service delivery facilities of community agencies in York Region.
- Poverty Relief Services provided by the Women's Centre of York Region provides access to counselling services, legal supports, housing information and referrals to many York Region support services. This project was a vital part of a supportive community network that reduced the depths of child poverty, while at the same time provided a vital link in the expansion of the continuum of supports that presently address homelessness and the risk of homelessness in York Region.

Projects provided important employment support

Employment support projects assist people to become or remain economically stable. This is done through training and employment opportunities that assist families and individuals to attain financial independence and an enriched quality of life.

- The Employment Support project delivered through the Sutton Youth Multi-Service Center provided aptitude/skill assessments, resume writing assistance and other job search supports to more than 85 at risk youth in Georgina. For the participants it was an important step towards developing employability skills required for the workforce, and resulted in 51 youth finding employment.
- The Learn for Work, Learn for Life project allowed the Literacy Council York-Simcoe to meet a life and work skills training gap in the region by providing training in essential life and employment skills in a supportive environment. In addition to the almost 90 residents including 28 Ontario Works participants who benefited from the project in 2007, the CDIF investment has given the agency the capability to continue meeting this service gap in future years.

4.4 CDIF PROMOTES INCREASED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

CDIF also provides additional benefits to the Region in the following ways:

- Leverages funds to reduce duplication, support economies of scale and increase agency efficiency by encouraging community agencies to collaborate when it make sense to do so to serve residents.

- Enables York Region to play a significant role with other regional funders as to how service dollars get allocated across the Region to reduce gaps and duplication of services.
- Encourages the use of community volunteers resulting in more cost effective services; and
- Supports the development of innovative approaches to delivering services in the community.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The CDIF Strategy is managed within the current budget allocations set aside for each fund included within the Strategy. In 2007, approximately 66.4% of CDIF funding came to the Region from the provincial government as indicated in the following table.

Table 1
Provincial and York Region Contributions to CDIF in 2007

Funding Source	Amount	Percentage of CDIF
Provincial Contribution	\$1,623,978	66.39%
Regional Contribution	822,027	33.61%
Total	\$2,446,005	100.00%

The Strategy has continued to be very effective in disbursing limited funds to agencies across York Region who are best able to serve the particular needs of their communities. The Region supports agencies and monitors the programs to ensure that funds are used effectively and efficiently.

As York Region continues to grow, the need for a solid network of community supports is becoming increasingly important to achieving and maintaining strong, healthy, economically and socially vibrant communities. CDIF has made significant contributions to the delivery of community-based social services.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

In 2007, as in past years, services were delivered to residents of all nine local municipalities.

The CDIF Strategy is an efficient, cost-effective and flexible way to purchase needed community services for residents across York Region. CDIF helped close to 38,000 low-

income residents get or keep jobs, find or keep their homes and provided supports to families and children that allows them to remain or become active contributors to our community and economy.

7. CONCLUSION

The CDIF Strategy enables the Region to plan, manage and fund the purchase of community-based services in York Region, in a way that ensures both the process and the results are accountable, fair, and equitable. This strategy has continued to be an efficient and effective way of managing very limited but important resources.

In 2007, the CDIF Strategy was successful in making a variety of community services available to children, youth, families and individuals across York Region. In addition to helping people in need, CDIF also facilitated inter-agency cooperation and collaboration, thus building important social service capacity and creating a strong network of community based supports.

This is an important investment that actively supports the needs of the Region's most vulnerable residents while helping to build socially and economically vibrant communities. However the rapid and diverse nature of the Region's population growth has resulted in an increase in the number and type of people in need of supports from community-based social services agencies. Council has noted that the Region consistently receives eligible proposals that exceed the funding available under CDIF and despite a variety of mitigation strategies; projects for badly needed services do not receive funding. The Community Services and Housing Committee has recommended the following options through the 2008 Budget to:

- Address the growing gap between eligible agencies that receive funding vs. those who do not; and
- Enable new agencies to get opportunities to establish themselves to meet the needs of York Region's changing population.

For more information on this report, please contact Cordelia Abankwa-Harris, Director of the Policy and Program Support Services Branch in the Community and Health Services Department at Extension 2150.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

(The attachment referred to in this clause is attached to this report.)