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HOMELESSNESS PARTNERING STRATEGY UPDATE: TRANSITION OF THE COMMUNITY ENTITY ROLE TO THE UNITED WAY OF YORK REGION

The Community and Health Services Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendations contained in the following report dated February 16, 2012, from the Commissioner of Community and Health Services.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. Council approve and provide authority to the Commissioner of Community and Health Services to transition the Community Entity role under the federal Homelessness Partnering Strategy from The Regional Municipality of York to the United Way of York Region.
2. Council approve a reduction in the 2012 gross expenditures of \$398,374 offset by the Homelessness Partnering Strategy funds.
3. Staff of the Community and Health Services Department circulate this report to Service Canada and the Community Advisory Board.

2. PURPOSE

This report seeks approval for The Regional Municipality of York to transition the Community Entity role of administering the federal government's Homelessness Partnering Strategy to the United Way of York Region (UWYR).

3. BACKGROUND

The Region has been administering the federal homelessness funding in York Region since its inception

In 1999, the federal government established the first homelessness fund through Human Resources Development Canada. The Region accepted the Community Entity role to administer the funding as the community was not positioned to take on the responsibility at that time. The federal government has had several different homelessness initiatives since that time and the Region has maintained its role as the Community Entity.

This funding program has evolved over the years to what is now called the Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) and is governed by Service Canada.

The federal funding under HPS is used to complement existing provincial and municipal funding at the community level. Through previous federal funding, the Region, as the Community Entity, coordinated the development of *The York Region Community Plan to Address Homelessness*. The Community Plan identifies specific local priorities for funding in order to build a network of supports and services to provide preventative and crisis supports to people who are at risk of or homeless in York Region.

HPS supports a housing-first approach, and seeks to prevent and reduce homelessness by helping to establish the structures and supports needed to move homeless individuals and at-risk individuals towards self-sufficiency and full participation in Canadian society. Key objectives of HPS are to:

- Prevent and reduce homelessness across Canada.
- Develop partnerships that contribute to a sustainable and comprehensive continuum of supports to help those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness move towards self-sufficiency.
- Mobilize partners at the federal-provincial/territorial and community levels to address barriers to well-being faced by homeless individuals and those at risk.

The implementation of HPS at the community level is overseen by a Community Advisory Board. As required by the federal government, the Community Advisory Board is comprised of local representatives. In York Region representatives from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, the United Way of York Region, the provincial government, and Regional staff comprise the Community Advisory Board. Its role is to engage stakeholders at the community level in order to implement HPS funding. The responsibilities include:

- Developing a community plan to address homelessness, assessing progress in addressing the community priorities and updating the plan accordingly.
- Ensuring that Service Canada HPS funding priorities and contractual conditions are met.
- Selecting and recommending projects to the Community Entity and Service Canada.
- Ensuring that the selected projects meet Service Canada criteria.
- Recommending a Community Entity.

As the Community Entity, York Region's role is primarily administrative. Responsibilities include:

- Supporting the Community Advisory Board.
- Issuing a Call for Proposals to the community.

- Developing contracts for all projects recommended by the Community Advisory Board.
- Monitoring and reporting on the results and outcomes of these projects to Service Canada.
- Meeting all financial reporting requirements as required by Service Canada
- Facilitating updates to the *Community Plan to Address Homelessness* (last updated in 2008).

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

The Region was appointed the Community Entity role upon renewed funding of the Homelessness Partnering Strategy from April 1, 2011 to March 31, 2014

As the Community Entity, the Region has successfully coordinated and administered five separate call for proposals resulting in much needed services and supports for the community. Through a combination of capital, service delivery and research projects, many community agencies who serve homeless individuals or those at risk of homelessness were able to develop and expand their programs and services.

Following the renewal of HPS by Service Canada in November 2010, the Region was once again confirmed as the Community Entity by the Community Advisory Board. The York Region community was allocated \$530,374 for service delivery and administration annually for the three year period (April 1, 2011 to March 31, 2014) for a total of \$1,591,122.

The Contribution Agreement was ratified with Service Canada and came into effect on April 1, 2011; however, due to the federal election the HPS funds were not immediately available when the previous agreement ended on March 31, 2011. This resulted in a delay of the call for proposals under HPS until the spring of 2012.

As such no new projects received HPS funding in 2011. However, to ensure continuity of service for existing projects that would have been impacted by the delay, the federal government agreed to extend existing service delivery projects for the first year of the new agreement. In York Region, two service delivery projects were eligible for the extension, the Community Legal Clinic's Eviction Prevention Program and the Women's Centre of York Region's Enterprising Careers program. Each project was extended from April 1, 2011 until March 31, 2012 which meant that there was no service disruption to clients in accessing these services. According to the federal agreement, these projects may not be extended beyond March 31, 2012.

United Way of York Region has expressed interest in assuming the role of the Community Entity

The UWYR has expressed interest in assuming the role of the Community Entity. A letter from the UWYR Board of Directors outlining their interest in becoming the Community Entity is attached (see *Council Attachment 1*). This request demonstrates the increased capacity within the community to take on this work and provide increased leadership. The UWYR is well positioned to assume this role and expand the work under its priority area of homelessness.

There are five other United Way agencies in Ontario that are the designated Community Entity and administer HPS funds including Kingston, Guelph, Peterborough, Durham and Simcoe.

By transferring the role of Community Entity to UWYR, new opportunities to leverage and expand partnerships will be available to support programs and services for those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. The UWYR's network includes many corporate champions and leaders who can become part of the discussion about homelessness in the Region and the actions necessary to address the issues related to homelessness.

There will also be an opportunity for increased collaboration between the Region and the UWYR as the Region will continue to be a member of the Community Advisory Board and will help build community support and strengthen the social service network. The UWYR has also affirmed that the Region will continue to actively participate in the development of any updates to the *Community Plan to Address Homelessness*. This will help to ensure that the Region's priorities as outlined in the Community and Health Services Multi Year Plan and any future directives around housing and homelessness are considered in the development of the Community Plan.

Next steps in proceeding with the proposed transfer of the Community Entity role to the United Way of York Region

If the transition of the Community Entity role is approved by Council, a transfer plan has been developed to minimize any disruption to the community and agencies. This plan was provided in draft to the Community Advisory Board and they subsequently supported the transfer to the UWYR. The transition plan includes the following actions:

- The Region will continue to support the Community Advisory Board and lead the call for proposals process until the transition is complete.
- The UWYR will complete an HPS application for Service Canada which will be submitted by Service Canada for Ministerial approval.
- The Region will provide advice to UWYR on completing the HPS application and provide support in meeting Service Canada reporting requirements for the first quarter of the new agreement.

- The Region and UWYR will work together to develop a communications plan to inform the community of the transfer of the Community Entity role to UWYR.
- The Region will continue as the Community Entity until the agreement between Service Canada and the UWYR is in place.
- A contingency plan will be developed in the event that the agreement between Service Canada and UWYR is not in place on April 1, 2012.

Link to key Council-approved plans

The proposed transfer aligns with the *From Visions to Results: 2011-2015 Strategic Plan*, specifically in improving social and health supports. An increased role in funding related to homelessness for the UWYR will result in partnerships and opportunities to leverage additional support from the broader community. This proposed transfer is consistent with the broader review of existing community funding programs identified in the Community and Health Services Department's Multi-Year Plan.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

York Region was allocated \$530,374 annually for a three year period (April 1, 2011 to March 31, 2014). As a result of the transfer to UWYR, January to March 2012 gross expenditures would be approximately \$132,000 with 100% funding provided by Service Canada. It is recommended that the 2012 budgeted gross expenditures be reduced by \$398,374. Also as a result of the transition of Community Entity role for the HPS program to the United Way of York Region, the Region will no longer contribute administrative supports such as legal services, risk management, procurement, finance, IT and communications to the management of HPS. There is no municipal tax levy impact.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

Collaboration between the Region and the United Way of York Region on HPS funding will build community support, and strengthen the social service network. The Homelessness Partnering Strategy will continue to benefit all York Region communities through the provision of supports to residents who are at risk of losing their homes or are homeless.

7. CONCLUSION

This report proposes that the Region withdraw as the Community Entity administering the Homelessness Partnering Strategy fund as early as March 31, 2012. If approved by the federal government the role of Community Entity could be managed by the UWYR as early as April 1, 2012. This proposed approach is consistent with other jurisdictions such

as Kingston, Guelph, Peterborough, Durham and Simcoe. The transfer of the role to the UWYR allows the Region to strengthen and leverage the capacity of community stakeholders in York Region to provide a broader continuum of homelessness supports to residents.

For more information on this report, please contact Lisa Gonsalves, Acting Managing Director, Strategic Service Integration and Policy at Ext. 2090.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

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



United Way
of York Region

February 9, 2012

Mr. Bill Fisch
Regional Chair & CEO
The Regional Municipality of York
17250 Yonge Street, Box 147
Newmarket, Ontario
L3Y 6Z1

Dear Chairman Fisch:

This letter confirms United Way York Region's interest in assuming the role of Community Entity under the Homelessness Partnering Strategy funding program to receive and administer funds on behalf of Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC).

Background

York Region has acted as the Community Entity on a range of federal government funds to address homelessness since 1999; the federal funding received has been efficiently and effectively used to complement and build on other provincial and regional funding to ensure a network of supports are available for those across the region at risk of or living homeless. In addition to providing critical capital and frontline investments, York Region's stewardship of the federal dollars, in the Community Entity role, have significantly increased community awareness and understanding of homelessness in York Region, driven evidence based research on the issue and its nuances in our region, and built the capacity of the sector to respond in a concerted and collaborative way.

As a member of the Community Advisory Board (CAB) since its inception, United Way has had the opportunity to work with and learn from the Region as it oversaw the development of a broad and inclusive community plan and cascading calls for proposals against identified community priorities. This active participation on CAB as well as our deep and strong partnership with the Region on the Human Services Planning Board, Local Immigration Partnership and Community Social Data Consortium to name but a few have significantly increased United Way's capacity and preparedness to oversee the broad Community Entity role and responsibilities under the federal governments Homelessness Partnering Strategy.

Opportunities Going Forward

Over the last five years, United Way York Region has undergone a most deliberate and significant transformation, evolving from more than a fundraiser to a community impact organization: a voice on our region's most pressing social issues; a catalyst for engaging citizen engagement in building our social infrastructure; a convenor of corporate, community and agency partners to build solutions.

It is this very transformation that drives our interest in becoming the Community Entity for the federal homelessness funds.

Specifically, United Way believes assuming the role:

- *Builds on our existing core competency of community investments:* soliciting proposals, approving contracts, reporting on activities and disbursements, collecting and sharing data and information; reporting on results and outcomes;
- *Provides an opportunity to leverage additional corporate, employee and community donor major gifts;* this is validated by a series of meetings United Way has already hosted with potential donors interested in directed investments to support capital and/or frontline programming supports;
- *Supports our commitment to increased community engagement and community-based research* with the development of a revised Community Plan, as required in the upcoming years through the Homelessness Partnering Strategy.
- *Mirrors the emerging role of United Ways across Canada,* six of whom have also been designated as the Community Entity for their respective communities.

In addition to the points mentioned above, the Region's role in delivering services to those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness will continue to shape the way homelessness services are provided in the Region. Through the upcoming development of the Housing and Homelessness Plan, there will be an opportunity to work together to address shared priorities that will result in a wider range of services to meet the needs of residents.

Next Steps

To ensure a seamless transition for the community and providers, United Way will continue working with the Regional Municipality of York and HRSDC to ensure due diligence on any and all issues related to the transitioning of the Homelessness Partnering Fund Community Entity role, including, but not limited to:

- overseeing transitional plan, compliant with Region of York policy and protocol and in consultation with HRSDC;
- ensuring an ongoing strategic role for and partnership with the Region reflective of its history in managing the project to-date and its mandate to deliver core and complementary homeless, health and community service, including but not restricted to participation on the CAB;
- securing all appropriate CAB and community approvals and confirmations, as required by the Region and/or HRSDC;
- ensuring timely and appropriate stakeholder communications;
- development and execution of required memorandums of understanding; etc.

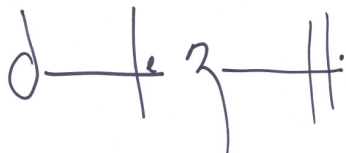
Conclusion

United Way is excited to be considered for the Community Entity role, following the foundational leadership the Region has provided over the past decade.

This request is consistent with our mission and mandate, and strengthens the outcomes embedded in our Strategic Directions through to 2014. We are committed, in close partnership with the Region, to work with the community, corporate champions, donors, labour, all levels of government and the critical network of providers towards homelessness prevention and mitigation.

Of course, as always, if you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to liaise with me directly at 905.474.9974, ext. 224 or dzanotti@uwyr.on.ca.

Always and only, thank you,



Daniele Zanotti
CEO

cc: Adelina Urbanski, Commissioner of Community and Health Services

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