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COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND INVESTMENT FUND 2006 ANNUAL ACTIVITY REPORT

The Community Services and Housing Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendation contained in the following report, April 19, 2007, from the Commissioner of Community Services, Housing and Health Services:

1. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that:

1. A copy of this report be shared with the Regional Office of the Ministry of Community and Social Services by Community Services and Housing Department staff.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide information about the activities and results of the 2006 Community Development and Investment Fund (CDIF). In 2006, the CDIF benefited over 33,000 residents of York Region.

3. BACKGROUND

On April 18, 2002, Regional Council approved the CDIF Strategy which became effective with the 2003 Business Planning cycle. The Strategy established the framework within which the Community Services and Housing Department plans, manages, funds and evaluates community projects through the purchase of community-based services. CDIF funding flows through two envelopes —Department Initiatives and Community Initiatives. Department initiatives include programs and services directly delivered or purchased through Purchase of Service contracts. The Community Initiatives include projects identified through a Purchase of Service Request process where eligible community agencies are invited annually to submit proposals to provide community programs funded by the Region.

Under the CDIF Strategy, the Department manages funds from provincial and municipal initiatives to provide community services and programs to the residents of York Region. These funds include the National Child Benefit (NCB), the Consolidated Homelessness Prevention Program (CHPP) and Municipal Purchase of Service funds.

The CDIF Strategy was in its third full year of operation in 2006. Since CDIF was established adjustments have been made to the Strategy to respond to community needs.

3.1 CDIF Projects for 2006

The selection of projects for the 2006 CDIF funding cycle began in the fall of 2005 when the Region issued its annual Call for Proposals inviting submissions from eligible community agencies. The CDIF Strategy clearly outlines the necessary criteria for agencies to be considered eligible and these criteria are included in the Region's proposal call.

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 November 17, 2005, 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 respond to emergency funding needs and allocate additional dollars received in-year in a timely and efficient manner.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

Through CDIF in 2006, community-based programs and services were able to provide important supports to York Region residents. It is estimated that more than 33,000 residents across York Region benefited from the CDIF strategy in 2006. Services were provided to children, youth, families and individuals. In all, 38 projects received funding through CDIF, with a total investment of $2.5 million.

As in the past, all projects that received CDIF funding were required to address priority areas which reflect the mandate and strategic direction of the Region and the Community Services and Housing Department and also address the growing needs of our communities. The priority areas established for 2006 under CDIF were:

- 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 (OW) participants and low-income residents.
- Initiatives that build capacity, facilitate enhanced collaboration and service integration amongst agencies.

4.1 Monitoring and Evaluation of Projects

Each project was monitored through regular project reports received at various intervals during the term of the project. Agencies reported specific data on the delivery of contracted services and included updates on project expenditures. Projects also received

site visits from regional staff as part of the monitoring process. These visits allowed regional staff an opportunity to discuss project performance.

Close monitoring of projects alerted regional staff to potential concerns and also gave opportunities for re-allocation of funding where it was evident that project outcomes varied from projections. This allowed the Department to maximize the use of available funding and increase the number of projects and services funded under CDIF.

Further to this, in February 2007, nine community-based projects were selected for on-site reviews. Projects were chosen using the following criteria:

- 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.
- Projects that utilised funding for which the funding sources required an evaluation.

The objectives of the review visits were to explore the achievement of project goals and objectives, to identify issues/lessons learned in the implementation of the projects and to discuss with the agency unplanned benefits or community development successes yielded by the projects. These reviews were an opportunity for regional staff to conduct a more in-depth review, learn from agencies and improve processes for future years. They also supported community development through the sharing of best practices and potential solutions to challenges faced by agencies.

4.2 Findings of Project Review Visits

The project reviews use a standard questionnaire designed to gather information about the agency's implementation of the project. No major issues were identified, but through these reviews, the following successes were noted.

1. **Successfully Targeting the Needs of Vulnerable and At-Risk Populations**
   Many at-risk York Region residents received specific and direct services that either reduced their vulnerability or provided support mechanisms. For example, the Community Housing Support Worker program assisted approximately 385 at-risk and homeless individuals with supports necessary to successfully secure and maintain housing. Also included in this program, a project at the Sutton Youth Multi-Service Centre provided over 200 homeless youth with basic life skills training, counselling and community housing resource referrals to assist their re-integration into the community.

2. **Enhancement of Services and Programs Already in Place**
   CDIF funding also assisted in building a broader network of social supports by making existing programs and services available to more people. The Job Skills project was able to target 'multiple-barriered' OW participants, design an employment supports program that was appropriate to their needs, and provide

supports to clients to enhance chances for successful completion of their training, and securing employment.

The Rose of Sharon Early Years Outreach project was designed to address the isolation that young single mothers experienced due to stigmatization and exclusion. The project extended the services of the agency allowing it to directly establish its services in Ontario Early Years Program Centres. This allowed the provision of services to over 230 single young mothers while at the same time promoting the acceptance of these clients into the Early Years Centres, overcoming their exclusion.

3. **Proactively Developing Community Connections to Support Service Delivery**
   Two of the projects initiated contacts with the private sector that allowed them to extend or enhance services. The Community Development project implemented by the Canadian Mental Health Association not only allowed residents of three Housing York Inc. (HYI) sites to improve their surroundings and participate in the planned management of their sites, but residents were also able to establish important links with community businesses for support of their community events.

   Similar connections with community organizations and businesses were developed by the York Region Food Network through their Community Kitchen program in 2006.

4.3 2006 Project Outcomes

As part of the preparation of this activity report, a complete summary of the project outcomes for all CDIF projects was developed. This summary is included in *Attachment 1*. In addition to encouraging agencies to succeed in their individual projects, CDIF also encourages partnerships between agencies to better serve residents. Some successful examples are outlined below.

4.3.1 Service Integration

Service integration results in better service to clients, as they can access appropriately bundled services within York Region. Service integration, a program-wide CDIF goal, was promoted in a number of different projects in 2006. For example:

- The Region continued its collaboration with nine Municipal Parks and Recreation Departments to implement summer recreational programs for children of social housing residents.
- The Sutton Youth Multi-Service Centre supported by CDIF, has been a one-stop resource providing emergency shelter, transitional housing, employment supports and employability skills training, and supports for youth seeking affordable and suitable housing in their community.

4.3.2 Partnerships

Partnerships result in more effective and efficient services to clients, and are another key goal of the CDIF Strategy. In 2006, partnerships were developed and fostered in a number of CDIF projects. For example:

- The Region continued its partnership with all nine local municipalities and both York Region School Boards to implement a Swim to Survive program teaching over 2,800 grade three students in the two York Region School Boards the basic skills required to survive an unexpected fall into water.
- The Social Services Network (SSN) for York Region mobilized partnerships with the faith community that serves South Asian residents. The project allowed SSN staff to provide information to almost 900 members of the faith community on the service providers in York Region, the services available, and how to access those services.

4.3.3 Community Input and Volunteerism

Community input on many of the services was facilitated through ongoing consultations with lead agencies and also in discussions with a cross section of community agencies about the CDIF Community Initiative process. In addition, many CDIF projects provided opportunities for direct volunteer involvement, while for others volunteer involvement was essential for delivering services. The following are some examples of volunteer involvement:

- Big Brothers, Big Sisters coordinated a volunteer mentoring program that trained and supervised 38 volunteer teen mentors who participated in an in-school program with 35 children from Performance Plus schools.
- Also, CDIF supported four York Region 'Out of the Cold' sites which used teams of community volunteers to provide food, clothing and emergency shelter to the homeless over the winter months.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The CDIF Strategy is managed within the current budget allocations set aside for each fund included within the Strategy. In 2006, 63.20% of CDIF funding came to the Region from the provincial government.

The Strategy has continued to be very effective in disbursing limited funds to agencies across York Region which 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.

CDIF is not resourced to meet all the needs of the community. However the Strategy has been successful in establishing a method of purchasing services from established community service providers to achieve clearly defined outcomes that assist vulnerable residents. As York Region continues to grow, the need for a solid network of community supports is important to achieving and maintaining strong, healthy economically and socially vibrant communities.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

The CDIF Strategy is an efficient, cost-effective and flexible way to purchase needed community services for residents across York Region. In 2006, as in past years, services were delivered to residents in all nine local municipalities. Over 33,000 residents in the Region benefited from CDIF funded programs and services. As the Region continues to grow and diversify, it is essential that CDIF is adequately resourced. This will enable the Region to respond to the changing needs of residents for community services, supporting agencies as they provide important programs and services, and encouraging strong linkages between agencies.

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 2006, 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 is actively supporting the needs of the Region's most vulnerable residents while helping to build socially and economically vibrant communities.

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

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

(The attachment referred to in this clause was included in the agenda for the May 9, 2007 Committee meeting.)