

6

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND INVESTMENT FUND STRATEGY: REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF RECOMMENDED 2009 ONE-YEAR PROJECTS

The Community Services and Housing Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendations contained in the following report, December 4, 2008, from the Commissioner of Community and Health Services:

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. Regional Council approve the full list of community service projects included in *Attachment 1 (Private)* under the Community Development and Investment Fund (CDIF) Strategy for one-year funding and that the Region enter into 2009 Purchase of Service agreements with the agencies for such projects after due diligence verifications are completed.
2. The Commissioner of Community and Health Services be authorized to execute the Purchase of Service agreements with the successful agencies, subject to review by Legal Services.
3. The Commissioner of Community and Health Services be authorized to allocate any new or related CDIF funds that may become available during the course of 2009 within the framework of provincial guidelines and the CDIF Strategy.

2. PURPOSE

This report requests approval for the funding of community service projects recommended through the Region's annual CDIF purchase of service process. The private attachment to this Report should be considered in a closed session of Committee and Council because it concerns security of Regional property. In 2009, these projects will result in a variety of priority community services to vulnerable residents across York Region, and will be implemented under Purchase of Service agreements.

As in past years, this report also seeks approval for the Commissioner of Community and Health Services to be authorized to allocate any new or related CDIF funds that may become available during the course of 2009 within the framework of provincial guidelines and the CDIF Strategy.

3. BACKGROUND

Since the CDIF Strategy was approved by Regional Council in 2002 (Clause No. 1 of Report No. 4 on April 18, 2002) it has become evident that purchasing priority community services from those agencies that are best equipped to deliver them is a cost-efficient and effective way of supporting the needs of York Region residents.

In recent years, emerging challenges, including rapid and diverse population growth, increasing community need and growing pressures on agencies to offer community-based supports have placed pressures on CDIF and the community as a whole. To address these concerns, Regional Council approved both an increased investment in CDIF to purchase additional services and extended the kinds of projects which can be considered for funding to assist agencies in building capacity. The focus of the CDIF Strategy on service delivery and on the three priority funding areas of homelessness supports, employment supports and family and children's services remains unchanged.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

CDIF purchases much needed community services

The services purchased by the Region under CDIF help residents find and keep work and provide families with options that allow parents to stay in the workforce and reduce child poverty. Other services actively prevent families and individuals from becoming homeless or help those who are homeless get back on their feet.

The CDIF Strategy continues to make a positive difference in the community services available to low income and vulnerable residents across the Region and has established the framework for an equitable and transparent process to distribute and manage funds in the community.

The annual CDIF Purchase of Service process has been administered by the Region's Supplies and Services Branch since 2003 and includes essential features of the Region's purchasing process.

Timely and appropriate information was provided to allow eligible agencies to respond to the Call for Proposals

The Purchase of Service Request for projects to receive CDIF funding in 2009 was released on September 18, 2008 and enabled community-based social service agencies to apply for the regular one-year CDIF funding stream and the new renewable funding stream approved by Council in April 2008. By including both funding streams through the same purchase of service request, agencies only needed to complete one application. This ensured that any projects that did not meet the additional renewable funding eligibility criteria could be automatically considered for one-year CDIF funding. In

addition, the Region was able to use a single communications strategy to let the community know about the changes to CDIF.

The communications strategy for this Purchase of Service Request included:

- a) Information posted September 18, 2008 on the Region's website with a banner link from the 'What's New' section on the home page.
- b) An email announcement of the release of the Purchase of Service request with a link to the document download page. This was sent September 18, 2008 to potentially eligible community agencies.
- c) Newspaper advertisements placed in each of the York Region Media Group newspapers covering all of York Region, between September 21, 2008 and October 16, 2008.
- d) A media release issued on September 22, 2008 announcing Regional Council's approval of the enhanced CDIF, and advising the community of the release of the Purchase of Service Request.
- e) An Information Meeting jointly hosted by the Community and Health Services Department and the Supplies and Services Branch, held on Friday October 3, 2008. The meeting outlined the features of the enhanced CDIF and answered questions from community agencies with regard to the purchase of service process, CDIF eligibility criteria, the priority areas for funding, the application process, and submission requirements. To maintain an open process and a level playing field the answers provided at the Information Session were shared with all applicants – whether or not they attended this session.

Also, in 2008 the option of downloading the CDIF documentation from the Region's web site was once more made available to agencies, and as in 2007, the community response to this option was extremely positive with just under 90% choosing this means of accessing the documentation.

The community responded very positively and as in past years, despite increased funding, the total value of the proposals received exceeded the amount of funding available. When the purchase of service request closed on October 23, 2008, 41 eligible proposals totalling \$4,091,696 were received requesting one-year funding from CDIF in 2009.

More projects recommended for one year funding than ever before and will provide for a wide range of services across the Region

Building on the evaluation process used in previous years, all eligible renewable funding proposals and one year funding proposals were evaluated by the Community and Health Services Department as well as by external funders including the Ontario Trillium Foundation, the Ministry of Community and Social Services and the United Way of York Region. The evaluation and selection process was facilitated by the Supplies and Services Branch.

The Selection Committee scored each proposal based on the criteria established by Regional Council including agency effectiveness; agency financial management; agency capacity; project benefits in the priority areas; project methodology and activities; project costs and budget, and project/program sustainability. The Selection Committee also sought to:

1. Identify strong projects which focused on the clients that the Department is mandated to serve in each of the priority areas (Homelessness Programs, Family and Children's Services and Employment Supports).
2. Avoid project and service duplication.
3. Provide services to residents throughout York Region.

One proposal which was not recommended for Renewable Funding was then considered for one year project funding along with the other applications for this funding. The 34 projects outlined in *Attachment 1* totalling \$2,241,164 are recommended for 2009 one year project funding.

Upon Regional Council's approval, the Community and Health Services Department will, as in past years, enter into negotiations with the successful agencies to develop Purchase of Service agreements for the delivery of approved services. During the negotiation process regional staff will verify each agency's representations as contained in its proposal and also ensure that approved amounts and all agreed services and funding conditions reflect the decisions of the Selection Committee. All agencies will be monitored and evaluated by regional staff throughout the implementation of their Purchase of Service agreements.

CDIF funding will be flowed to all approved projects. Projects will be delivered from January 1, 2009 to December 31, 2009. It is important that the recommended projects are considered by Council at this time so that agencies know what the outcome of their proposal is and can plan accordingly. If these projects are not approved at this time, agencies may be forced to discontinue programs and lay-off staff.

As required by the CDIF Strategy, a report to Regional Council outlining the outcomes of the projects to receive funding in 2009 will be submitted to Regional Council.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The total funding amount of \$2,241,164 for projects recommended in this report to receive one year funding through this community process in 2009 is managed within the annual approved budget allocations for CDIF within the Department's base budget..

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

Investments made through CDIF result in tangible benefits in each local municipality. In 2007, close to 38,000 York Region residents from all municipalities directly benefited from these services. As a result of the increased investment in CDIF made by Regional Council, more projects will receive funding and more residents will benefit from this Strategy.

The community initiatives generated by this increased CDIF Purchase of Service Request will provide the Region's most vulnerable residents with needed community social services to support families and children, prevent homelessness and provide important employment supports. These services will be directed to residents in all nine area municipalities, and are expected to bring measurable benefits to York Region as a whole.

7. CONCLUSION

The Council-approved CDIF Strategy successfully builds on existing community supports by fostering community development and partnerships in every municipality. In addition, the extensive use of community volunteers increases the return on the funding invested while at the same time supports the building of a stronger volunteer sector.

The enhanced CDIF further extends these benefits to the York Region community, while maintaining the core elements that have made it successful. With the ability to accommodate funding requests that could not have been considered in past years, CDIF now allows the Region to better address the increasing pressures that have accompanied rapid and diverse population growth.

The results of this successful community investment strategy are evident in that many residents with low incomes have been kept from falling between the cracks and needing the more expensive social services provided by the Region. CDIF has become an important part in the provision of services to vulnerable residents, as well as in the development of a stronger social service system in York Region.

For more information on this report, please contact Cordelia Abankwa-Harris, Managing Director, Strategic Service Integration and Policy Branch in the Community and Health Services Department at Extension 2150.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

(A copy of the Private Attachment is attached separately.)