



THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA
PUBLIC HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE
FINAL AGENDA

PHSSC 3-2020

Tuesday, March 10, 2020

1:00 p.m.

Council Chamber

Niagara Region Headquarters, Campbell West

1815 Sir Isaac Brock Way, Thorold, ON

	Pages
1. <u>CALL TO ORDER</u>	
2. <u>DISCLOSURES OF PECUNIARY INTEREST</u>	
3. <u>PRESENTATIONS</u>	
4. <u>DELEGATIONS</u>	
5. <u>ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION</u>	
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7. OTHER BUSINESS

8. CLOSED SESSION

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| 8.1 | <u>Confidential Verbal Update</u>
A Matter of Labour Relations or Employee Negotiations - Provincial Employment Transformation |
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9. BUSINESS ARISING FROM CLOSED SESSION ITEMS

10. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 7, 2020 at 1:00 p.m. in the Council Chamber, Regional Headquarters.

11. ADJOURNMENT

events, please contact the Accessibility Advisor at 905-980-6000 ext. 3252 (office), 289-929-8376 (cellphone) or accessibility@niagararegion.ca (email).

Ontario Poverty Reduction Strategy

Local Considerations

Adrienne Jugley, Commissioner
Michelle Johnston, Policy Advisor
Community Services

March 10, 2020

Background

2008: “Breaking the Cycle” (Ontario Poverty Reduction Strategy)

- Achieve a 25% reduction in the number of Ontario children living in poverty within five years

2009: *Poverty Reduction Act* passed

2014 – 2019: “Realizing our Potential” (Ontario Poverty Reduction Strategy)

- Continued commitment to breaking the cycle for children and youth (reduce children living in poverty by 25%)
- Increase employment and income security
- Long-term goal of ending homelessness
- Use evidence-based policy and measure success

New Provincial Priorities

- Encouraging job creation and providing employment opportunities
- Providing people with the right supports and services
- Lowering the cost of living and making life more affordable

Tracking Niagara's Progress to Reduce Poverty

Strong local economy (e.g. low unemployment rate at 5.8%)

Lower household income compared to the provincial average

- Niagara: \$42,511 vs. Ontario: \$48,473

Growing number of local residents who are '**working poor**'

- Niagara 2006: 6.5% vs. Niagara 2016: 8.13%

Slightly higher rate of newborns who are below/above normal **birth weight**

- Niagara: 19.4% vs. Ontario: 19.1%

Higher rate of increase in **core housing need**

- Niagara: +1.5% vs. Ontario +0.8%

Higher rate of increase in vulnerability for **children's developmental health and well-being**

- Niagara: +5.2% vs. Ontario: +1.1%

Higher number of ODSP beneficiaries needing **increased supportive housing, mental health / other supports**

- Niagara 2016: 5.1% vs. Ontario 2016: 3.9%

Local Considerations

Housing & Homelessness Prevention

To build on existing progress, local recommendations include:

- Enhance Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative funding
- Invest in capital and operating funding for supportive housing

Housing & Homelessness Prevention

To further improve poverty reduction efforts, local recommendations include:

- Increase funding to build and maintain community housing
- Invest in initiatives to increase the supply of affordable rental and community housing
- Ensure government policy does not inadvertently increase consumer debt burdens and inflate housing prices further
 - E.g. align annual allowable rent increases with increases to minimum wage and social assistance rates

Seniors Supports & Long-Term Care

To build on existing progress, local recommendations include:

- Invest in and expand eligibility for the Ontario Seniors Dental Program
- Invest in the Assistive Devices Program and expand coverage for low-income individuals

Seniors Supports & Long-Term Care

To further improve poverty reduction efforts, local recommendations include:

- Enhance funding to the community support sector
- Coordinate programs between the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Long-Term Care and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing
- Consider expansion of tax deductible health care services for caregivers
- Consider more measures to address financial abuse

Child Care and Support for Families

To build on existing progress, local recommendations include:

- Increase investments in licensed child care spaces and proportionate operational funding
- Continue the CARE tax credit
- Invest in the Wage Enhancement Grant
- Invest in the Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP) program
- Maintain funding and expand eligibility for Healthy Smiles Ontario
- Maintain full-day kindergarten

Child Care and Support for Families

To further improve poverty reduction efforts, local recommendations include:

- Maintain or increase investments in child care fee subsidies, special needs resourcing, EarlyON centres, and before and after-school programs
- Expand eligibility for child care fee subsidy proportionate to further investment in fee subsidy

Social Assistance & Employment

To build on existing progress, local recommendations include:

- Target further investment in mental health and addictions services to those receiving social assistance with barriers to life stabilization and employment
- Invest in incentives that encourage people receiving social assistance to find meaningful employment, without losing vital benefits such as dental and drug coverage

Social Assistance & Employment

To further improve poverty reduction efforts, local recommendations include:

- Review social assistance rates, and rent and utility scales
- Consider possible unintended consequences of changes to definition of disability or ODSP requirements
- Review health benefits for OW clients
- Index minimum wage to inflation
- Invest in literacy, training and skills development

Investments in Social Services



Demonstrates a **cost-effective** means to improve health and social outcomes.

- E.g. Every \$10 spent on housing and supports for those experiencing chronic homelessness, saves \$21.72 in the areas of health, justice and social service systems.



Produces **positive economic effects**.

- E.g. Every dollar invested in child care results in an economic output of \$2.27.
- E.g. The development of one affordable housing unit generates 2 to 2.5 new **local** jobs

Questions?

Subject: Local Considerations to Inform the Development of the next Ontario Poverty Reduction Strategy

Report to: Public Health and Social Services Committee

Report date: Tuesday, March 10, 2020

Recommendations

That this report **BE APPROVED** as a written submission to the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services further to their request for local recommendations to inform the next provincial Poverty Reduction Strategy.

Key Facts

- Every five years (as mandated by the Poverty Reduction Act, 2009) the provincial government is required to consult on and develop a new Poverty Reduction Strategy.
- The Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS), in collaboration with other provincial ministries, is seeking input from municipal partners, Ontario residents, employers and service providers to identify opportunities for action to reduce poverty.
- Niagara Region's Community Services department, with input from Public Health and Economic Development, Niagara Regional Housing, and the Niagara Poverty Reduction Network, has developed a proposed submission, which includes recommendations based on local needs and experiences of poverty reduction efforts.
- This proposed submission seeks to respond to the MCCSS call for feedback to inform the next provincial Poverty Reduction Strategy, with a focus on key service areas (housing and homelessness prevention, seniors supports and long-term care, child care and support for families, and social assistance and employment), and seeks to align with the following priorities outlined by the Province:
 - Encouraging job creation and providing employment opportunities
 - Providing people with the right supports and services
 - Lowering the cost of living and making life more affordable
- Poverty reduction strategies and investment in their associated initiatives must remain focused on improving outcomes for low-income individuals and families, and account for the current cost of poverty.

- In many cases, maintaining investments in critical social services is a cost-effective approach to improving health and social outcomes, and produces positive multiplying economic effects that should be considered in the next provincial Poverty Reduction Strategy.

Financial Considerations

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

Analysis

Background

Niagara Region's Community Services department, with input from Public Health and Economic Development, Niagara Regional Housing and the Niagara Poverty Reduction Network, sought to review the current provincial Poverty Reduction Strategy to assess existing initiatives and identify opportunities for improvement, in order to better the economic and social conditions of those living in poverty in Niagara.

The current provincial Poverty Reduction Strategy, "Realizing Our Potential" (2014-2019) emphasizes commitments to: break the cycle of poverty for children and youth, move towards employment and income security, establish a long-term goal to end homelessness, and use evidence-based policy to measure success. At that time, indicators identified to cover key aspects of health, education, income security, material deprivation and housing security included: birth weights, school readiness (Early Development Instrument), educational progress (combined grade 3 and grade 6), high school graduation rates, low income measure, depth of poverty, Ontario housing measure, youth and young adults not in education, employment or training (NEET), long-term unemployment, poverty rates of vulnerable populations.

Tracking Niagara's Progress to Reduce Poverty

Data identified at the launch of the first provincial Poverty Reduction Strategy in 2008-2009 continues to be used as a baseline to measure against for subsequent provincial poverty reduction strategies. A number of these initial and additional indicators are not available at a regional or local level, or have since been replaced with different measures of need.

The summary below provides a high-level overview of comparable data specific to Niagara region to understand the local context of poverty.

Economic indicators for the St. Catharines-Niagara Census Metropolitan Area demonstrates a relatively strong economy, with indicators such as a low unemployment rate (5.8%), growing levels of international trade and an increasing number of businesses operating in the Niagara region. However, household income per capita is substantially lower than the provincial average (Niagara: \$42,511 vs. Ontario: \$48,473), and has not kept up with inflation.

When inflation outpaces income growth, individuals and families with low-incomes may be even further challenged to keep up with the growing cost of living in Niagara. In fact, those living in Niagara who work, but continue to live in poverty¹ are a growing number (2006: 6.5% of employed population vs. 2016: 8.13% of employed population). This may indicate that low-income individuals and families are not necessarily benefitting from a growing local economy.

In examining other indicators used to understand the local context of poverty, it is important to consider the growing level of core housing need² both in Niagara and across Ontario. Between 2006 and 2016, the rate of this growth in Niagara has been higher than the provincial average (Niagara: +1.5% vs. Ontario: +0.8%). Households in core housing need may also be identified as at risk of experiencing homelessness.

In examining Early Development Instrument data between 2008 and 2018, children in Niagara and across Ontario have become more vulnerable in their overall developmental health and well-being. Again, in Niagara the rate of increase in vulnerability has been higher than the provincial average (Niagara: +5.2% vs. Ontario: +1.1%)³.

In Niagara, 19.4% of newborns are below or above normal birth weight, which can be associated with risk factors of poverty later in life. Babies born in low-income families are more likely to be below or above normal weight. For instance, in Niagara, there are

¹ An individual is counted among the working poor if they meet the following conditions: (i) has an after-tax income below the Low Income Measure, (ii) has earnings of at least \$3000 a year (income threshold for receiving the Working Income Tax Benefit), (iii) is not a student, (iv) lives independently (non-institutional population).

² Core housing need is an indicator used to identify households living in housing considered unsuitable, inadequate or unaffordable, and whose income levels are such that they could not afford alternative suitable and adequate housing in their community.

³ The three areas where children in Niagara are particularly vulnerable includes physical readiness for the school day (e.g. coming to school with appropriate clothing, shoes and food), overall social competence with peers, and aggressive behaviour.

three times more babies born with a low birth weight in the most materially deprived 20% of the population compared to the least deprived 20% of the population.⁴

Investments in Social Services: A Cost-Effective Approach to Improving Outcomes with Associated Positive Economic Effects

Poverty reduction strategies and investment in their associated initiatives must remain focused on improving outcomes for low-income individuals and families, and account for the current cost of poverty. According to the Public Health Agency of Canada (2016), Canadians in the lowest income group (20% of the population) account for 60% of the total direct economic burden of health including costs for acute care inpatient hospitalizations, prescription medication, and physician consultations.

As the provincial government considers its future spending, investments in social services are viewed as one of the most cost-effective means to improve health and social outcomes. For example, a recent study⁵ published in the Canadian Medical Association Journal indicates that:

- Every \$10 spent on housing and supports for those experiencing chronic homelessness, saves \$21.72 in the areas of health, justice and social service systems.
- Every one cent spent on social services per dollar spent on health, would increase life expectancy by an additional 5% and decrease potentially avoidable mortality by an additional 3% in one year.

Furthermore, research analyzing investments in critical social services not only demonstrates a cost-effective approach to achieving better population health and social outcomes, but also produces positive economic effects. As examples, public investment in early years and child care has been viewed to have a multiplying effect – every dollar invested in child care results in an economic output of \$2.27⁶. Through the construction of new housing units, and repair and retrofitting of existing stock, investments in community housing have also demonstrated to result specifically in local job creation. In fact, the Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association and the Co-operative Housing

⁴ The Ontario Marginalization Index is a data tool that combines a wide range of demographic indicators into four distinct dimensions of marginalization: residential instability, material deprivation, dependency and ethnic concentration. Material deprivation includes factors such as: education, unemployment, lone-parent families, and households needing major repairs.

⁵ Dutton, D. J. et al. (2018). Effect of provincial spending on social services and health care on health outcomes in Canada: an observational longitudinal study. *CMAJ Journal*, 190(3), 66-71.

⁶ Fairholm, R. (2011). Economic Impacts of Early Learning and Care, Early Education Economic Forum, University of Toronto.

Federation of Canada (Ontario Region) reports that the development of one affordable housing unit is estimated to generate between 2 to 2.5 new local jobs⁷.

Housing & Homelessness Prevention

Ending homelessness and ensuring access to safe, adequate and affordable housing reduces poverty and supports employment.

Building on existing progress, it is recommended that provincial levels of government continue to:

- Enhance Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative funding to continue to build on the work to reduce homelessness and poverty, and ensure Niagara Region receives an equitable allocation informed by indicators of need
- Invest in capital and operating funding for supportive housing as a means of ending homelessness (e.g. Home for Good program), and to support those with mental health and/or addictions issues, seniors and those with developmental disabilities
- Maintain Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative (OPHI) housing allowances at current levels
- Hire more landlord adjudicators to address backlogs at the Landlord Tenant Board

To further improve poverty reduction efforts, it is recommended that provincial levels of government:

- Increase funding to build and maintain community housing – most stock is between 20-50 years old and requires significant capital repairs
- Invest in initiatives aimed to increase the supply of rental and community housing
- Ensure that government policy does not inadvertently increase consumer debt burdens and inflate housing prices further
 - E.g., Align annual allowable rent increases with increases to minimum wage and social assistance rates so as to not further disadvantage those who are precariously housed and living in poverty
- Consider funding the new Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit at 100% of average market rent, as opposed to 80% to encourage households to come off the waitlist
- Develop new measures to understand homelessness which leverage community-based data through the implementation of coordinated access systems

⁷ Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. (2000). Economic Impacts of Residential Construction. Research Highlight, "Socio-Economic Series, Issue 69." (Ottawa: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation); Dunning, W. (2012). *Economic and Fiscal Impacts of Residential Construction – 2012* (Ottawa: Canadian Home Builders' Association); National National Association of Home Builders. (2009.) *The Local Impact of Home Building in a Typical Metro Area: Income, Jobs, and Taxes Generated* (Washington DC: NAHB).

Seniors Supports and Long-Term Care

Supporting seniors both in the community and within long-term care homes can reduce poverty and ensure seniors are connected with the right supports and services to ensure a high quality of life.

Building on existing progress, it is recommended that provincial levels of government continue to:

- Invest in the Ontario Seniors Dental Program, and expand eligibility to include those with marginally higher incomes than current threshold requirements
- Provide financial assistance to individuals accessing the Assistive Devices Program, and expand coverage for low-income individuals from 75% to 100% of the cost of equipment such as wheelchairs and mobility aids

To further improve poverty reduction efforts, it is recommended that provincial levels of government:

- Develop an integrated human resources strategy for health care to address staffing shortages, focused on education and training, recruitment, retention and technology. For example:
 - Provide tuition relief for students in health-care related programs
 - Support organizations in providing paid placements and on-the-job training through apprenticeship programs
 - Support the creation of more living classrooms⁸ for PSWs in training
 - Focus on targeted solutions for rural and remote communities, such as incentives and assistance for people to work in regions where they are most needed
 - Provide incentives to organizations to provide growth and development opportunities, including career laddering for PSWs and RPNs
- Enhance funding to the community support sector (e.g. support with homemaking, meals and personal care) to ensure seniors are not forced into long-term care prematurely
- Coordinate programs between the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Long-Term Care and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, and provide additional funding to expand supportive housing for seniors
- Expand assessments for health benefits (e.g. Ontario Seniors Dental Program, Assistive Devices Program, etc.) beyond solely income and marital status which can

⁸ Living classrooms are interprofessional education programs delivered in a long-term care home, where post-secondary educators, students and those **living** and working in the long-term care home engage in a culture of interactive learning.

skew the potential impacts on discretionary income such as: housing, housing modifications, transportation, dental, vision, medical supplies, and additional services with user fees

- Consider expansion of tax deductible health care services for caregivers accessing additional supports (e.g. Adult Day Program is not a nursing model of service and does not qualify as a tax deductible expense)
- Consider more measures to address financial abuse (i.e. calls/scams)
- Consider tax incentives to home modification and adaptive aids to support seniors aging-in-place

Child Care and Support for Families

Quality, affordable child care and support for families breaks the cycle of child poverty and allows parents to secure meaningful employment.

Building on existing progress, it is recommended that provincial levels of government continue to:

- Increase investments in licensed child care spaces and ensure proportionate investments in operational funding
- Offer the CARE tax credit while recognizing that it may disproportionately benefit households who can afford to pay upfront child care costs until they receive a tax rebate
- Invest in the Wage Enhancement Grant to ensure that Early Childhood Educators (ECE) within the licensed child care system earn an adequate wage, and continue to address the critical ECE shortage (largely recognized to be a function of poor wages)
- Invest in the Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP) program⁹ as an evidence-based home-visiting program that improves the health, well-being and economic self-sufficiency of first-time parents and their children
- Maintain funding for Healthy Smiles Ontario and expand eligibility requirements for higher income levels
- Maintain full-day kindergarten to support high quality early learning
- Invest in the Healthy Babies, Healthy Children Program

⁹ NFP pairs expecting mothers with a Public Health Nurse to receive ongoing home visitation throughout pregnancy, infancy and into toddlerhood (until age two).

To further improve poverty reduction efforts, it is recommended that provincial levels of government:

- Prioritize, maintain or increase investments in child care fee subsidies, special needs resourcing, EarlyON centres and before and after-school programs
- Increase eligible household income levels for child care fee subsidy to better support low-income families, proportionate to further investment in fee subsidy:
 - Current:
 - \$0 to \$20,000 is fully-subsidized with no cost to parents
 - \$20,001 to \$60,000 is subsidized on a sliding scale
 - Proposed:
 - \$0 to \$40,000 is fully subsidized with no cost to parents
 - \$40,001 to \$80,000 is subsidized on a sliding scale

Social Assistance and Employment Considerations

Building on existing progress, it is recommended that provincial levels of government continue to:

- Target further investment in mental health and addictions services to those receiving social assistance and experiencing multiple barriers to life stabilization and employment
- Remove barriers and invest in incentives that encourage people receiving social assistance to find meaningful employment, without losing vital benefits such as dental and drug coverage

To further improve poverty reduction efforts, it is recommended that provincial levels of government:

- Review social assistance rates, and rent and utility scales to address inflation and rising costs of living
- Consider possible unintended consequences (e.g. a potential increase of OW caseloads by up to 30%) prior to changing the definition of disability or the requirements related to ODSP
- Review Temporary Care Assistance to align with strategies to break the cycle of poverty for children and youth (i.e. eligibility for youth in transition programs)
- Review health benefits for clients accessing Ontario Works to align with ODSP benefits (e.g. dental coverage)
- Index minimum wage to inflation to ensure low-income individuals and families can afford rising costs of living

- Invest in literacy, training and skills development to produce desired employment outcomes, help reduce caseloads and ensure job retention

Additional Considerations

- Investments in mental health and addictions supportive housing using a Housing First approach, may provide individuals with the stability necessary in order to pursue employment opportunities
- Recognized as an efficient tool of poverty reduction, affordable local transportation connects people to services and jobs in their communities, and should be considered in tandem with encouraging job creation
- Investments in broadband services (i.e. Wi-Fi internet) similarly plays a critical role in connecting people to the right services and supports
- Poverty reduction efforts require flexible approaches that take into account variation across local economies. For example, the top two employment sectors in Niagara (retail trade, and accommodation and food services) may be indicative of the seasonal and/or precarious nature of work.

Conclusion

Poverty reduction strategies and investment in their associated initiatives must remain focused on improving outcomes for low-income individuals and families, and account for the current cost of poverty. In many cases, maintaining investments in critical social services is a cost-effective approach to improving health and social outcomes, and produces positive multiplying economic effects that should be considered in the next provincial Poverty Reduction Strategy.

Niagara Region's Community Services commits to continuing collaboration with other Regional departments, post-secondary institutions, and non-profit service providers in the community – through tables such as the Niagara Poverty Reduction Network – to evaluate the effectiveness of poverty reduction initiatives in Niagara. In particular, it is important to note that Brock University is currently evaluating the Niagara Prosperity Initiative (a place-based grant program intended to address poverty) and anticipates bringing forward a final report with associated recommendations to Council in 2021 (see COM 2-2020 for further details).

Community Services staff also appreciates the opportunity provided by MCCSS to offer feedback on the provincial Poverty Reduction Strategy, and looks forward to continued dialogue with Ministry counterparts to ensure that the strategies and initiatives designed to reduce poverty meet the needs of those living in Niagara.

Alternatives Reviewed

Not applicable.

Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities

Healthy and Vibrant Community.

Other Pertinent Reports

- COM 2-2020: Niagara Prosperity Initiative Update

Prepared by:

Michelle Johnston, MA
Policy Advisor
Community Services

Recommended by:

Adrienne Jugley, MSW, RSW, CHE
Commissioner
Community Services

Submitted by:

Ron Tripp, P.Eng.
Acting Chief Administrative Officer

This report was reviewed in consultation with Cassandra Ogunniyi, Strategic and Health Equity Initiatives Coordinator, Public Health & Emergency Services, Blake Landry, Manager, Economic Research and Analysis, Economic Development, and Marc Todd, Manager, Social Assistance & Employment Opportunities, Community Services.

Subject: Emergency Shelter Negotiated Request for Proposal (NRFP) Award Results

Report to: Public Health and Social Services Committee

Report date: Tuesday, March 10, 2020

Recommendations

1. That the homelessness contracts for emergency shelter services **BE AWARDED** in the amount of \$11,705,184 for the period April 1, 2020 to March 31, 2023 to the following nine (9) service providers:

1.	Boys and Girls Club of Niagara	\$ 403,200
2.	Casa El Norte Refugee Assistance Program	\$ 403,200
3.	The Hope Centre	\$ 1,116,000
4.	Matthew House Refugee Ministry of Fort Erie	\$ 403,200
5.	The RAFT (Niagara Resource Service for Youth)	\$ 583,434
6.	The Salvation Army Booth Centre	\$ 1,050,000
7.	Southridge Community Church	\$ 2,577,000
8.	Start Me Up Niagara	\$ 966,750
9.	The Young Women's Christian Association of Niagara Region (YWCA Niagara Region)	\$ 4,202,400
TOTAL		11,705,184

2. That an additional contingency of \$250,000 **BE APPROVED** should system adjustments be necessary during the term of the contracts to increase the number or adjust the type of beds offered.
3. That staff **BE AUTHORIZED** to execute any required amendments and documentation related to the agreements for service providers of emergency shelter to implement funding adjustments.

Key Facts

- The purpose of the report is to seek approval to provide \$11,705,184 to the emergency shelter system for the period April 1, 2020 to March 31, 2023 (36 months).

- The requested funding includes an additional contingency of \$250,000 should funding adjustments be necessary during the term of the contracts to increase the number or adjust types of beds offered.
- Emergency shelter services include overnight accommodation, meals, hygiene items, and other supports including assisting clients to find stable and adequate housing.
- This award will provide two (2) additional apartment units for families in the shelter system over the prior contract period. Council is receiving this report as the award value of the Request for Proposal (RFP) is over the \$5 M threshold of the Procurement By-law 02-2016 which requires Council approval.

Financial Considerations

The total cost, of the three (3) year contract, to provide emergency shelter in Niagara is \$11,705,184 or \$3,901,728 annually. The funding highlighted within this report is based on the current 2020 approved budget and confirmed external funding allocations. The three (3) year contracted amount of \$11,705,184 is contingent upon receiving the same funding level until March 31, 2023. Homelessness Services are funded primarily by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) (70%), Federal Reaching Home funding (8%), as well as Regional levy (22%). The funding received from the MMAH is mainly through the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI) program. The funding is used not only to support the shelter system but also to fund the continuum of critical homelessness services (prevention, outreach, and housing with supports/Housing First). Confirmed CHPI funding for 2020-21 fiscal year is \$7,847,786.

This award is within the 2020 approved budget for Homelessness Services, which included a 20% increase to the shelter funding allocation, over 2019. This increase was required to support providers of emergency shelter as they continue to experience pressures associated with higher occupancy rates (resulting in additional direct costs eg. meals, laundry, cleaning), addressing the needs of clients presenting with higher acuity (substance abuse, mental health and trauma) and providing cost of living increases to agencies from the previous 2017 contracts.

Analysis

The Community Services department operationalizes the Region's responsibilities as the Consolidated Municipal Service Manager (CMSM) for the homelessness system in Niagara, through the Homelessness Services division. Its key responsibility is service system planning and administration for the homelessness system, and it operates under rules established by the MMAH.

The Homelessness Services division contracts with community agencies to provide emergency shelter services to individuals and families who are homeless. These agencies provide overnight accommodation, food and personal basic needs, along with services to find appropriate housing for the client. In addition, shelters provide connections and referrals to other services including mental health supports and treatment, addictions treatment and healthcare counseling as required.

The Homelessness Services team is dedicated to ensuring that Niagara's homelessness system aligns with best practice and reflects local needs, and therefore set a goal to maintain existing shelter capacity. This aligns with provincial funding expectations i.e. to operate from a Housing First and people centered approach which focuses on the shift from reliance on emergency shelter solutions to preventative and rapid rehousing services. In addition, there is a commitment to support agencies to transition shelter service orientation to a housing-focused shelter approach. Housing-focused sheltering diverts individuals seeking shelter to safe and appropriate options wherever possible (De Jong, 2019). If an individual does enter a shelter there is an expectation that they will be working on obtaining permanent housing during their stay (De Jong, 2019)¹.

These practices were also referenced in the January 2019 Homelessness Service System Review report by Whitesell & Company. Ten recommendations were proposed by Whitesell & Company to support the evolution to a more streamlined, efficient and effective homelessness services system that is proposed to better enable clients to obtain affordable, safe and appropriate housing that meets their needs.

A Negotiated Request for Proposal (NRFP) process has been undertaken through the Region's Procurement division and a review process completed in accordance with the Council approved Evaluation Matrix from COM 29-2019. The NRFP, Contract number 2019-RFP-299 for emergency shelter services was issued on October 22, 2019 and closed on November 19, 2019. Eleven (11) proposals were received at time of closing. The evaluation was completed by a panel of six (6) individuals, with representation from another service system manager, and Niagara Region's Public Health, Finance and Community Services departments.

The resulting financial awards take into consideration agency requests and a movement toward standardization of funding for comparable offerings, while working within the

¹ [Housing Focused Sheltering November 21 2017.pdf](#)

funding envelope available for this service. Throughout the 2017-2020 contract period an additional 45 beds were added to the system and are included in this award. In addition, a further two (2) apartment units have been added in this award. The two (2) new apartment units for families are more economical than hotel rooms which are utilized to support system pressures when additional capacity is required. It is anticipated that system transformation, with an emphasis on the best practices of diversion and housing-focused shelter provision, along with increased spaces in supportive housing, will allow the existing shelter providers to meet the community needs for emergency shelter.

The total request for funding from the successful agencies was \$16,332,867. Niagara Region has negotiated with all nine (9) agencies to ensure standardized levels of service, training opportunities for staff and to be able to award agencies within the 2020 approved budget. Through successful negotiations the award was reduced by \$4,627,683, and local agencies have once more committed to address unfunded costs through fundraising efforts.

Alternatives Reviewed

Not applicable. Process approved by Council via COM 29-2019.

Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities

Aligns with the goals in Niagara's 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Action Plan, including Goal 1: housing individuals who do not have a home and Goal 4: building capacity and improving the effectiveness of the housing system.

Healthy and Vibrant Community – Objective 2.3 – Addressing Affordable Housing Needs

Other Pertinent Reports

- COM 29-2019 Procurement of Homelessness Services for Period of April 1, 2020-March 31, 2023
- COM 23-2019 Niagara Region Application for Built for Zero Canada
- COM 10-2019 Homelessness Services System Review
- COM 1-2020 Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative Investment Plan 2020-21

Prepared by:

Carla Montana, BBA
Homelessness and Emergency Services
Advisor
Community Services

Recommended by:

Adrienne Jugley, MSW, RSW, CHE
Commissioner
Community Services

Submitted by:

Ron Tripp, P.Eng.
Acting Chief Administrative Officer

This report was prepared in consultation with Margaret Penca, Manager, Homelessness Services; Stephanie Muhic, Program Financial Specialist; Jeff Mulligan, Manager Strategic Sourcing; and reviewed by Cathy Cousins, Director, Homelessness Services and Community Engagement.

Works Cited

De Jong, I. (2019, December 4). *The Book on Ending Homelessness*. Victoria, BC: FriesenPress.

Subject: Homelessness Services Housing First and Home for Good Contract Extensions

Report to: Public Health and Social Services Committee

Report date: Tuesday, March 10, 2020

Recommendations

1. That the existing Housing First contracts **BE EXTENDED** as per Appendix 1, with the value of \$76,154;
2. That the existing Home for Good contracts **BE EXTENDED** as per Appendix 1, with the value of \$31,579;
3. That an additional contingency of \$25,000 **BE APPROVED** should additional extensions be necessary; and
4. That staff **BE AUTHORIZED** to execute any required amendments and documentation related to the agreements for service providers of Housing First and Home for Good to implement contract extensions.

Key Facts

- The purpose of this report is to seek approval to extend current Housing First contracts in keeping with Committee and Council approval of COM 07-2017.
- Housing First and Home for Good contracts are currently delivered in Niagara through ten Housing First and three Home for Good service providers. These providers support 200 units dedicated to Housing First and 40 units dedicated to Home for Good.
- Housing First and Home for Good programs are a recovery-oriented approach to homelessness that involves moving people who experience homelessness into independent and permanent housing as quickly as possible, with no preconditions, and then providing them with client focused services to support housing stability and prevent a return to homelessness.
- In October 2019, Niagara Region's Homelessness Services division issued multiple Negotiated Requests for Proposals, including Housing First and Home for Good, with the goal to seek preferred proponents to enter into direct contract negotiations with Homelessness Services for service delivery.
- Gateway Residential & Community Support Services of Niagara Inc. as a lead agency, in partnership with Southridge Community Church and Niagara Resource

Service for Youth (The RAFT), is the successful proponent for the delivery of Housing First and Home for Good programs.

- Extending contracts of current service providers for a range of 1-3 months will provide a smooth transition to the successful proponent, allowing agencies to transition support plans with clients and minimize destabilization of the homelessness system.

Financial Considerations

The total cost to extend the Housing First and Home for Good contracts with current providers amounts to \$107,733, and is within the 2020 funding available for Homelessness Services. Homelessness Services will work with Niagara Region's Legal Services and Procurement divisions on the extension of the existing contracts.

Analysis

Community Services operationalizes the Region's provincially mandated responsibilities as the Consolidated Municipal Service Manager (CMSM) for the homelessness system in Niagara. This system operates under rules established by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH), and receives Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI) and Home for Good supportive housing funding from the Province. The Region also receives federal funding under the Homelessness Partnering Strategy (known as Reaching Home) and is identified as the local Community Entity for this funding.

Niagara Region's Homelessness Services division carried out an approved formal procurement process (COM 29-2019) for the homelessness service system, with the intention to contract these services for a three-year period from April 1, 2020 - March 31, 2023. Successful proponents will operate homelessness services and participate in the transformation to a new integrated homeless system. These proponents have been determined for Outreach, Emergency Shelter, Housing First and Home for Good. The procurement process for the Niagara Emergency Energy Fund, Transitional Housing and Prevention is still in progress.

Current service provider contracts are set to expire March 31, 2020. The current Housing First and Home for Good contracts are recommended to be extended, as per Appendix 1, to support a smooth transition of service delivery from existing providers to the successful proponent, Gateway Residential & Community Support Services of

Niagara Inc., in partnership with Southridge Community Church and Niagara Resource Service for Youth (The RAFT).

In keeping with Committee and Council's approval of COM 07-2017 which provided the authority to award Housing First contracts for the period April 1, 2017 to March 31, 2020, staff is seeking Committee approval to further extend these contracts as outlined in Appendix 1. Of note, while COM 07-2017 did not include the Home for Good contracts, these extensions are being provided as information only.

Alternatives Reviewed

Provide a brief analysis of the possible alternatives and explain why they are not recommended.

Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities

Aligns with the goals in Niagara's 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Action Plan, including Goal 1: housing individuals who do not have a home and Goal 4: building capacity and improving the effectiveness of the housing system.

Healthy and Vibrant Community – Objective 2.3 – Addressing Affordable Housing Needs

Other Pertinent Reports

- COM 07-2017 Housing First Providers in Niagara Region
- COM 10-2019 Homelessness Services System Review
- COM 23-2019 Niagara Region Application for Built for Zero Canada
- COM 26-2019 Homelessness Services Report 2018
- COM 29-2019 Procurement of Homelessness Services for Period of April 1, 2020-March 31, 2023

Prepared by:
Maggie Penca
Manager of Homelessness Services
Community Services

Recommended by:
Adrienne Jugley, MSW, RSW, CHE
Commissioner
Community Services

Submitted by:

Ron Tripp, P.Eng.

Acting Chief Administrative Officer

This report was prepared in consultation with Bart Menage, Director of Procurement and Strategic Acquisitions, Cathy Cousins, Director of Homelessness Services and Community Engagement and reviewed by Stephanie Muhic, Program Financial Specialist.

Appendices

Appendix 1 Homelessness Services Housing First and Home for Good Contract
Extensions Values

Appendix 1 Homelessness Services Housing First and Home for Good Contract
 Extensions Values

Program	Vendor Legal Name	Contract Extension
Housing First	Start Me Up Niagara	\$34,116
Housing First	The Hope Centre: Community Resources in Advocacy	\$5,078
Housing First	Bethlehem Housing and Support Services	\$4,309
Housing First	The Young Women's Christian Association of St. Catharines (YWCA)	\$14,875
Housing First	The Governing Council of the Salvation Army of Canada on behalf of St. Catharines Booth Centre	\$17,776
Total		\$76,154
Program	Vendor Legal Name	Contract Extension
Home For Good	Start Me Up Niagara	\$26,263
Home For Good	The Hope Centre: Community Resources in Advocacy	\$5,316
Total		\$31,579



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Fax – Applications: 905-935-0476
Fax – Contractors: 905-682-8301
Web site: www.nrh.ca

March 2, 2020

Ann-Marie Norio, Regional Clerk
Niagara Region
1815 Sir Isaac Brock Way
Thorold, ON L2V 4T7

Dear Ms. Norio,

At their February 14, 2020 meeting, the Niagara Regional Housing Board of Directors received the following information as attached in the report NRH 5-2020:

That the Niagara Regional Housing Board of Directors send a letter to the Ombudsman of the Province of Ontario with a copy to Regional Council and area MPPs and FORWARD to the Public Health and Social Services Committee for information.

It is further requested that the Regional Chair send a letter to the Ontario Ombudsman supporting the request from Niagara Regional Housing for a review of the ongoing delays in matters before the Landlord and Tenant Board.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Walter Sendzik', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Councillor Walter Sendzik
Chair

Office of the Ombudsman of Ontario
483 Bay Street, 10th floor, South Tower
Toronto, ON M5G 2C9

March 2, 2020

To Whom it May Concern,

It is with utmost respect that the Niagara Regional Housing Board of Directors must convey our ongoing concerns with delays in matters before the Landlord and Tenant Board.

As you may appreciate, both private landlords and not-for-profit housing associations operate on the income they receive from their rental properties. Prior to the fall of 2019, applications to terminate tenancies for non-payment of rent were processed and hearings were scheduled within four to five weeks of the date of filing. More recently, we are finding that hearings are sometimes scheduled four or five months after filing. The financial impact on social housing landlords, with the burden to carry tenants who are not paying rent, is creating a significant impact on our day-to-day operations. We can only imagine how this is adversely impacting private landlords who have large mortgages as well as operating expenses.

NRH is in the business of providing affordable housing and such delays are affecting our ability to meet our mandate. On a day-to-day basis we are finding that tenants are learning of the delays which are allowing them to remain in rental units without paying for months on end.

We believe that this situation has been caused by the large number of vacancies that appear in the list of adjudicators who are available to hear cases. These adjudicators are appointed by the province. We are advised that the Landlord and Tenant Board, in particular the Hamilton office which governs our territorial jurisdiction, is understaffed as attrition takes place and no new employees are hired. There are times when we file applications by fax and the paperwork languishes for an extended period of time without being processed due to these staff shortages.

We respectfully ask that the government and the ombudsman take immediate action to remedy this situation to make the system effective and efficient again. Failure to do so will result in social housing providers' inability to provide suitable housing to those truly in need.

Sincerely,



Walter Sendzik
Board Chair, Niagara Regional Housing

cc: The Hon. Steve Clark, Minister, Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing
Jim Bradley, Regional Chair, Niagara Regional Council
Jeff Burch, MPP Niagara Centre
Wayne Gates, MPP Niagara Falls
Sam Oosterhoff, MPP Niagara West
Jennie Stevens, MPP St. Catharines

**Please call 905-682-9201 if you need this information in a different format,
or translated into another language.**

Subject: Seniors Services Quality Improvement Report – October to December 2019

Report to: Public Health and Social Services Committee

Report date: Tuesday, March 10, 2020

Recommendations

That this report **BE RECEIVED** for information.

Key Facts

The purpose of this report is to provide Committee and Council with highlights of quality initiatives and outcomes in the fourth quarter of 2019 for Seniors Services. Areas of focus in this quality update include:

- Seniors Services Strategic Plan 2020-2023
- Infection Prevention and Control – Outbreaks and Hand Hygiene
- Bedrail Failure Mode Effect Analysis (FMEA)

Financial Considerations

The activities highlighted in this report were funded within the 2019 approved operating budgets. The Ministry of Long-Term Care (MLTC) and the Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Brant Local Health Integration Network (HNHB LHIN) are the primary sources of funding for the Seniors Services division. Other funding sources include user fees and municipal tax levy.

Analysis

Seniors Strategic Plan 2020-2023

The Long-Term Care Homes Act and Accreditation Canada require long-term care homes to develop a strategic plan every three years. The purpose of the Seniors Services Strategic Plan is to guide the work of the division over the next three years. The plan sets strategic directions focused on services delivered to seniors in Niagara Region's Community Programs as well as in its long-term care homes.

The strategic plan was developed through a comprehensive, staff-led engagement process. Seniors Services' clients / residents, families and caregivers, staff and

community partners provided input and feedback through in-person focus groups and online surveys.

The new vision for Seniors Services is “*Extraordinary Care. Compassionate Team. Collaborative Leader*”. This vision will help drive the work for Seniors Services and is intended to resonate with staff at all levels.

The key strategic priorities are:

- Strengthen Workplace Health and Safety and Workflow
- Engage and Empower Staff
- Enhance Care Experiences
- Improve Outcomes Through Innovation
- Maximize Collaboration with Partners

In order to move these strategic priorities forward, specific projects, initiatives and actions will be identified in annual and multi-year implementation plans. These plans will ensure Seniors Services is aligned to meet current and future needs of seniors living in Niagara, as identified through the strategic planning process.

Infection Control – Outbreaks and Hand Hygiene

Outbreaks in long-term care homes have an impact on the quality of life for residents. Long-term care homes take a number of steps to decrease the risk and length of outbreaks including increased cleaning of high touch surfaces, encouraging residents and staff to get the flu shot, advising families not to visit if they are feeling unwell and ensuring good hand hygiene practices. In 2019, the eight Niagara Region homes had 14 outbreaks including 11 upper respiratory outbreaks (with symptoms of cough, congestion and fever) and 3 enteric outbreaks (with symptoms of vomiting, diarrhea and stomach cramps). The total number of outbreaks decreased slightly from 2018 when there were 16 outbreaks across the homes.

It is widely understood that good hand hygiene prevents the spread of infection and disease. In support of enhanced hand hygiene practices, Seniors Services has a comprehensive hand hygiene program that incorporates annual training on infection control practices and a regular schedule of monthly audits. Staff use a computer application to complete monthly audits. Audits include the four moments of hand hygiene: initial contact with the resident, before sterile technique, after exposure to body fluids and after resident contact. The application provides timely feedback to foster a learning culture of improved hand hygiene techniques and practices. Seniors Services

reached their target for compliance this past quarter by achieving a rate of 98% compliance at the four moments of hand hygiene.

Bed Entrapment Program Failure Mode and Effect Analysis (FMEA)

In the past, the use of bedrails was utilized as a safety mechanism to prevent the risk of falls. Informed by research and analysis, today routine use of bedrails in long-term care homes is discouraged and largely eliminated when possible due to the risk of bed entrapment. Bed entrapment is an event in which an individual is caught, trapped, or entangled in the spaces in or around the bed rail, mattress or bed frame. Bed entrapment has been found to lead to injuries up to and including death. Those most vulnerable for bed entrapment include individuals who are elderly, frail, confused, restless, are in pain, have altered mental status or uncontrolled body movements. As such, long-term care residents are recognized as a high-risk group.

To ensure best practice and guarantee the highest level of resident safety, Seniors Services engaged the Region's Business Excellence and Innovation team to complete a review and prospective analysis of the Bed Entrapment Prevention Program. The program review used the Failure Mode and Effect Analysis (FMEA) tool. Using this tool the team identified key points in the Bed Entrapment Prevention Program that required additional effort to further reduce risks.

Areas of risk identified in the process included staff training, the process to trial a bed rail alternative, and ensuring bed rails that are no longer required or appropriate are removed. Solutions detailed in the action plan include an enhanced training plan (introducing testing to confirm staff understanding and knowledge retention), regular meetings with registered staff and leadership to ensure open and frequent lines of communication, ensuring proper assessment, trial and removal of bed rails. Follow-up action plans are now completed and being implemented across the homes.

Seniors Services has been asked to present the bed entrapment prevention program at the provincial AdvantAge spring 2020 conference, recommending it as an industry best practice program.

Alternatives Reviewed

Not Applicable.

Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities

Healthy and Vibrant Community.

Other Pertinent Reports

None.

Prepared by:

Kim Eros
Associate Director Clinical & Support
Services, Community Services

Recommended by:

Adrienne Jugley, MSW, RSW, CHE
Commissioner, Community Services

Submitted by:

Ron Tripp, P.Eng.
Acting Chief Administrative Officer

This report was prepared in consultation with Jeannette Bax, Business Excellence and Innovation Program Manager, Sandy Dupuis, Manager of Compliance and Community Engagement and reviewed by Henri Koning, Director, Seniors Services.

Appendices

Appendix 1 Seniors Services Report Card 2019

Appendix 1

Seniors Services Report Card 2019

Measures	Definition	2019 Q1	2019 Q2	2019 Q3	2019 Q4
Seniors Long Term Care Home Metrics					
Cognitive Impairment	This metric provides a percentage of residents whose diagnosis includes dementia, other than Alzheimer's or related neurologic diseases after the resident assessment has been completed.	66.7	66.1	65.79	66.06
Resident Satisfaction Survey	This metric provides a measure of the residents' perception of the services and overall rating of a great place to live. The resident satisfaction survey is issued annually. The 2018 MBN median for upper-tier municipalities was 93%. In 2018 the median for the 8 Niagara Region LTC Homes was 95%.	95			
Pressure Ulcers	This is a measure of the # of worsened stage 2-4 pressure ulcers documented on their target assessment and the stage of pressure ulcer is greater on their target assessment than on their prior assessment (Prov. Avg. 2.6%)	3.7	3.73	3.25	2.96
Outbreaks	The resident home area may be declared in outbreak by Public Health if two or more residents residing in the same resident home area have two or more consistent infectious symptoms (In 2018 the total number of outbreaks was 16).	5	2	4	3

Measures	Definition	2019 Q1	2019 Q2	2019 Q3	2019 Q4
% of Resident who have fallen in the last 30 days	This is a measure of the % of residents who sustained a fall in the last 30 days recorded on their target assessment. (Prov. Aver. 16.25%)	17.05	18.25	17.00	16.65
% of Residents with New Fractures	This is a measure of the % of residents who sustained a fracture during this quarter on their most recent assessment. This total includes any fracture that may occur. The goal is to minimize all fractures. (Prov. Aver. 2.1%)	1.74	0.79	1.64	1.075
Seniors Community Programs					
Number of unique individuals served in 2018	Individual is counted once in a calendar year regardless of the number of services one individual may be accessing	1682	1698	1748	1614
% satisfied with overall services	Average across all SCP programs	97			
# of complex case consultations	Multi-agency collaboration is required to support the diverse needs of the individual in developing a community plan of support/care	10	23	4	11

MEMORANDUM

COM-C 4-2020

Subject: Provincial Employment Transformation
Date: March 10, 2020
To: Public Health and Social Services Committee
From: Adrienne Jugley, Commissioner, Community Services

As you are now aware, we have been notified by the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development that we were unsuccessful in our application to be the Service System Manager for our prototype area, for employment services (including those services we provide to recipients of social assistance).

The Ministry also announced the successful proponents in each of the three areas (one for-profit provider, one not-for profit consortium, and one Community College), the announcement is attached for your information. No municipal service manager applications were successful in the three prototype areas.

The successful proponent for the Niagara/Hamilton area is Fedcap (a U.S. based company), an organization that will lead a consortium of providers which includes two current Employment Ontario service providers (Canadian Council on Rehabilitation and Work, Operation Springboard) and two current providers of Ontario Disability Support Program Employment Supports (Corbrook and Community Living Toronto).

As we are aware that the province has very aggressive timelines associated with this initiative, we anticipate hearing shortly from Fedcap as they assume the role of service manager and begin planning employment services for our area. As there are significant financial implications for all social assistance providers, we will be providing the PHSSC committee with updates and recommendations for any service delivery changes over the next several months. We will, of course, work closely with the new service manager to ensure that our clients receive the best employment supports possible and identify opportunities for us to work collaboratively to support an effective local employment system reflective of the unique needs and opportunities of our community.

Lastly, I want to thank our staff from both Community Services and colleagues from across the corporation who assisted with our submission. I believe that the work that

went in to a very comprehensive application and vision for an improved system, will be helpful as we work with Fedcap in the months ahead.

Respectfully submitted and signed by:

Adrienne Jugley, MSW, RSW, CHE
Commissioner



NEWS

Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development

Ontario Moving Ahead with the Reform of Employment Services

February 14, 2020 10:00 A.M.

Ontario's Government is moving ahead with the reform of the employment services system by introducing new Service System Managers in three prototype regions across Ontario. This approach will:

- Create an efficient employment service to meet the needs of all clients, including those on social assistance or with a disability.
- Be more responsive to local labour market needs.
- Drive results for job seekers, employers and communities.

Milestones of the reform

Winter 2019 - Announced plan to modernize employment services

- In 2016, [the Auditor General reported](#) that Ontario's employment and training programs were not effectively helping people find and keep full-time jobs.
- On February 12, 2019 the government announced its [plan to modernize Ontario's employment services](#) by creating a new service delivery model that integrates social assistance employment services into Employment Ontario.
- Service System Managers would also be selected to plan and deliver more locally-responsive employment services starting in three prototype regions.

Spring/Summer 2019 - Engaged with stakeholders and partner

- To ensure the new employment services system meets the needs of job seekers and employers, the government engaged with nearly 200 stakeholders and partners in spring/summer 2019.

Summer/Fall 2019 - Announced prototype regions and opened Service System

Manager competition

- On [July 2, 2019, the government announced](#) that the new employment services model would first be implemented in three prototype regions: Region of Peel, Hamilton-Niagara and Muskoka-Kawarthas.
- A new competitive process open to any public, not-for-profit and private sector organization was launched to select Service System Managers for the three prototype regions.

January 2020 - Service System Managers selected

The government evaluated all qualified proposals and selected a Service System Manager for each prototype region that is best positioned to manage the employment system and deliver results:

- For Region of Peel: WCG, part of the APM Group.
 - WCG is a Canadian subsidiary of The International APM Group Pty Ltd (APM), a global human service organization based in Australia. In the last year, APM supported more than 350,000 people across 10 countries by designing and delivering employment, health and rehabilitation services.
- For Hamilton-Niagara: A consortium led by Fedcap.
 - The consortium led by Fedcap includes two current Employment Ontario service providers (Canadian Council on Rehabilitation and Work, Operation Springboard) and two current providers of Ontario Disability Support Program Employment Supports (Corbrook, Community Living Toronto).
- For the Muskoka-Kawarthas region: Fleming College.
 - Fleming College has more than 50 years of experience delivering education, skills training and employment services to students, job seekers and employers. Each year, 3,000 job seekers access Employment Ontario services via Fleming College.

Next steps of the reform

- The new Service System Managers will start establishing a presence in their prototype region and familiarizing themselves with the existing employment

service provider network. However, clients will not experience any changes to how they access employment services and supports at this time.

- Lessons learned from the prototype regions will be applied to the future roll out across the province (expected to start in 2022).
- As the new system is implemented in the prototype regions, the government will continue to work with service delivery partners across Ontario to plan and deliver stronger, more localized employment and social assistance services.
- The changes that will be introduced in the prototype phase will not apply to the services delivered on-reserve by First Nations, including Ontario Works Employment Assistance and Employment Ontario employment services.

LEARN MORE

- [Employment and Training Services in Ontario](#)

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[Available Online](#)
[Disponible en Français](#)

Bradley Metlin Minister's Office
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February 14, 2020

Ann-Marie Norio, Regional Clerk
Niagara Region
1815 Sir Isaac Brock Way
Thorold, ON L2V 4T7

Dear Ms. Norio,

At their February 14, 2020 meeting, the Niagara Regional Housing Board of Directors, passed the following motion as recommended in attached report NRH 3-2020:

That Niagara Regional Housing Quarterly Report October 1 to December 31, 2019 be APPROVED and FORWARDED to the Public Health and Social Services Committee and subsequently to Regional and Municipal Councils for information.

Your assistance is requested in moving report NRH 3-2020 through proper channels to Regional Council.

Sincerely,

Mayor Walter Sendzik
Chair

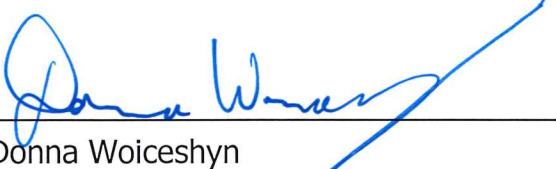


Q4 (October 1 to December 31, 2019) to Board of Directors

Recommendation:

That Niagara Regional Housing Quarterly Report October 1 to December 31, 2019 be APPROVED and FORWARDED to the Public Health and Social Services Committee and subsequently to Regional and Municipal Councils for information.

Submitted by:


Donna Woiceshyn
Chief Executive Officer

Approved by:


Walter Sendzik
Chair

Directors:

Walter Sendzik, Chair
Regional Councillor
St. Catharines

Gary Zalepa, Treasurer
Regional Councillor
Niagara-on-the-Lake

Tom Insinna
Regional Councillor
Fort Erie

James Hyatt, Vice-Chair
Community Director
St. Catharines

Betty Ann Baker
Community Director
St. Catharines

Betty Lou Souter
Community Director
St. Catharines

Karen Blackley, Secretary
Community Director
Thorold

Barbara Butters
Regional Councillor
Port Colborne

Leanne Villella
Regional Councillor
Welland

Q4 (October 1 to December 31, 2019)

HIGHLIGHTS:

Application Activity

741 received & processed



Work Orders

3,675 issued



Capital Program

8 projects ongoing

51 contract orders issued



Rent Arrears

= \$36,134.21

or **2.81%** of the monthly rent charges



Community Resources & Partnerships

offered supports to

144

new referrals



43

partners

Non-Profit Housing Programs

65% deemed HEALTHY



Rent Supplement / Housing Allowance

1,441 units



Niagara Renovates

- Inspections are complete
- 55 homeowners will receive 2019/2020 funding



Welcome Home Niagara

7 homeowners received assistance



Housing First Project

16

Individuals / families housed



Appeals

= **11** 6 upheld
5 overturned



New Development

- Carlton & Roach • complete
- Hawkins/Dell • demo Jan. 2020
- construction spring 2020



Q4 (October 1 to December 31, 2019)

VISION

That the Niagara community will provide affordable, accessible and quality housing for all residents

MISSION

To expand opportunities that make affordable housing an integral part of building healthy and sustainable communities in Niagara

As the administrator of social housing for Niagara Region, Niagara Regional Housing (NRH) works to fulfill our vision and mission through six main areas of responsibility:

1. [Public Housing \(NRH Owned Units\)](#)
2. [Non-Profit Housing Programs](#)
3. [Rent Supplement Program](#)
4. [Affordable Housing Program](#)
5. [Service Manager Responsibilities](#)
6. [Housing Access Centre and Centralized Waiting List](#)



Definitions can be found in the attached Reference Sheet.

1. Public Housing (NRH Owned Units)

DAY-TO-DAY MAINTENANCE:

In Q4, **3,675 work orders** were issued, representing \$ 1,004,181. \$ 65,866 of this amount was charged back to tenants who were held responsible for damages.

	2018-Q4	2019-Q1	2019-Q2	2019-Q3	2019-Q4
# of work orders issued	3,203	2,500	3,084	3,111	3,675

Q4 (October 1 to December 31, 2019)

CAPITAL PROGRAM:

The Capital Program is responsible for maintaining the Public Housing (NRH Owned Units) asset and planning for future sustainability.

In Q4, 51 contract orders were issued, seven public tenders closed and purchase orders issued \$2,788,400.

The Capital Program was responsible for eight capital projects valued at \$2,788,400 including:

- 2 projects – pavement retrofits
- 2 projects – fencing replacements
- 1 project – window and sealant replacements
- 1 project – curtain wall and sealant replacements
- 1 project – shingle roof replacement
- 1 project – window replacements
- 22 RFP's and RFQ's - various investigations, health and safety repairs, emergency repairs, structural repairs and pavement retrofits

As of December 31, 2019, \$ 9,800,000 of the \$11.7 budgeted (excluding emergency) has been committed and or actually spent (85%).

TENANT MOVE OUTS:

Move Outs By Reason

Health	6
Long Term Care Facility	10
Deceased	11
Private Rental	9
Voluntarily Left Under Notice	4
Eviction – Tribunal	6

NRH Transfer	5
Moved to Coop or Non-Profit	0
Bought a House	0
Left Without Notice	5
Other/None Given	15
Cease to Qualify	0
TOTAL	71

In Q4, there were **71 move outs**. Six involved eviction orders granted under the Ontario Landlord Tenant Board (LTB) – Arrears (five), Disturbances N5 (one). Five of the evictions were enforced by the Sherriff.

	2018-Q4	2019-Q1	2019-Q2	2019-Q3	2019-Q4
# of move outs	65	51	86	57	71

Q4 (October 1 to December 31, 2019)

ARREARS:

NRH Housing Operations actively works to reduce rent arrears, which remained consistent throughout 2019.

	Dec 31, 2018	Mar 31, 2019	Jun 30, 2019	Sept 30, 2019	Dec 31, 2019
Rent charges for the month	\$1,187,770.00	\$1,203,317.00	\$1,257,090.00	\$1,267,460.00	\$1,286,793.00
Accumulated rent arrears	\$24,135.76	\$35,736.89	\$34,004.39	\$35,549.21	\$36,134.21
Arrears %	2.03%	2.97%	2.71%	2.80%	2.81%

INSURANCE:

Nothing to report in Q4.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES AND PARTNERSHIPS:

In Q4, we had partnerships with **43 community agencies** across Niagara. As a result of these partnerships, more than 200 support and enrichment activities were offered to tenants at NRH sites. Each partnership contributes to tenant lives and, in turn, the success of the Public Housing community as a whole:

- NRH launched a new partnership with Niagara College in the integrated (non-family, aged 16 and over) buildings on Scott Street in St. Catharines. Scott Street has been a challenging community for a number of years, housing many tenants with mental health and addiction issues. At times, these vulnerable tenants were targeted by drug dealers and had to choose between nefarious friendships or isolation within their units. NRH worked with Niagara Regional Police to stop the criminal activity at the building and is now working with Niagara College to provide support and positive activities. Niagara College provides a supervisor for the Recreation and Social Service Worker students who are gaining valuable experience working with low-income, often vulnerable, populations. NRH tenants benefit from life skills workshops and positive interactions with each other. Together, NRH, Niagara College and the Scott Street tenants are rebuilding Scott Street into a safe, pleasant place to live.

Also during Q4, NRH Community Programs Coordinators (CPCs) offered support to **144 new referrals of tenants in need of assistance¹**. Of those new referrals, **65% were considered medium-high need**, (e.g. child safety concerns, eviction, social issues, cognitive concerns). In particular, there was an increase in the number of tenants needing help with arrears and social issues.

¹ This number is lower than previous quarters due to the implementation of the new Yardi case tracking system and adjustments being made to ensure consistent case tracking.

Q4 (October 1 to December 31, 2019)

2. Non-Profit Housing Programs

As administrator of social housing for Niagara Region, NRH provides legislative oversight for **60 Non-Profit Housing Programs (non-profit and co-operative)**. Operational Reviews are conducted to determine the overall health of each.

	2018-Q4	2019-Q1	2019-Q2	2019-Q3	2019-Q4
Healthy	40	40	40	40	39
Routine Monitoring	17	18	17	17	18
Intensive Monitoring	2	0	1	1	1
Pre-PID (Project in Difficulty)	1	1	1	1	1
PID (Project in Difficulty)	1	1	1	1	1
TOTAL	61	60	60	60	60

NRH Housing Programs staff continue to work with Housing Providers as they move toward End of Operating Agreements (EOA) / End of Mortgage (EOM).

3. Rent Supplement Program

In Q4, there were **1,441 Rent Supplement/Housing Allowance units** across Niagara. In the Rent Supplement program, tenants pay 30% of their gross monthly income directly to the private landlord and NRH subsidizes the difference up to the market rent for the unit. The Housing Allowance program is a short-term program that provides a set allowance to help applicants on the wait list.

	2018-Q4	2019-Q1	2019-Q2	2019-Q3	2019-Q4
Fort Erie	28	26	32	32	30
Grimsby	26	34	26	24	22
Lincoln (Beamsville)	11	11	11	11	13
Niagara Falls	230	235	239	240	239
Niagara-on-the-Lake	-	4	5	5	5
Pelham	21	20	19	19	19
Port Colborne	53	67	62	65	64
St. Catharines	732	741	780	773	778
Thorold	53	57	61	56	57
Welland	201	209	203	200	198
West Lincoln	15	15	15	15	16
TOTAL	1,370	1,419	1,453	1,440	1,441

Variance in the Rent Supplement program are a reflection of fluctuation between agreements ending and new agreements taken up with landlords.

Q4 (October 1 to December 31, 2019)

An **In-Situ Rent Supplement Program** has been developed to engage new landlords and offer applicants on the Centralized Waiting List an opportunity to receive Rent-Geared-to-Income assistance where they currently live. This removes the need for moving related expenses and broadens the network of landlords in business with NRH.

In Q4, NRH initiated new agreements with **12 new landlords**.

4. Affordable Housing Program

NIAGARA RENOVATES PROGRAM:

The Niagara Renovates program provides assistance to low-to-moderate income homeowners for home repairs, accessibility modifications and the creation of secondary suites in single family homes.

Niagara Renovates inspections for 2019-2020 funding are now complete. Inspections include all areas inside and outside of the home to ensure compliance with program guidelines. Issues are identified and a detailed Inspection Report is provided to the homeowner.

NRH received \$600,000 through the Investment in Affordable Housing - Extension (IAH-E) program for homeowner and secondary suite repairs and \$311,015 for multi-unit repairs, totaling \$911,015 for the 2019/2020 period.

NRH received an additional \$376,370 through the Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative (OPHI) for homeowner and housing provider renovations and repairs for the 2019/2020 period.

55 homeowners have been approved for funding.

HOMEOWNERSHIP PROGRAM – “WELCOME HOME NIAGARA”:

The Homeownership program assists low-to-moderate income rental households to purchase their first home by providing a down payment loan.

NRH received \$180,000 through the Investment in Affordable Housing - Extension (IAH-E) program for the 2019/2020 period, with \$100,000 of that allocated to Habitat for Humanity Niagara.

In Q4, **seven homeowners** received assistance through Welcome Home Niagara. **One of these was an NRH tenant.**

	2018-Q4	2019-Q1	2019-Q2	2019-Q3	2019-Q4
# of homeowners assisted	19	0	4	6	7

Q4 (October 1 to December 31, 2019)

HOUSING FIRST PROGRAM:

The Housing First program helps people move quickly from homelessness to their own home by providing supports to help difficult to house individuals find and keep housing.

In Q4, **15 individuals/families** were housed through the Housing First program. Since 2012, Housing First has helped 438 individuals/families.

	2018- Q4	2019- Q1	2019- Q2	2019- Q3	2019- Q4
# of individuals/families housed	27	10	23	15	16
# of Housing First units (at quarter end)	184	189	198	197	202

17 of these Housing First units were created with NRH's new development at 527 Carlton Street in St. Catharines.

RENTAL HOUSING (NEW DEVELOPMENT):

NRH New Development

Carlton Street, St. Catharines COMPLETE	Amount	Units
Investment in Affordable Housing-Extension (IAH-E), Year 3	\$5,806,000	45
Investment in Affordable Housing-Extension (IAH-E), Year 4	\$2,888,000	23
Social Infrastructure Fund (SIF), Year 1	\$2,387,817	17
Roach Avenue, Welland COMPLETE		
Social Infrastructure Fund (SIF), Year 3	\$1,200,000	8
Hawkins Street/Dell Avenue, Niagara Falls		
Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative (OPHI)	\$3,000,000	20
Regional Development Charges / NRH Reserves	\$17,090,000	53
TOTAL	\$32,371,817	166

Roach Avenue

- Project substantial completion on October 28
- Facility has been turned over to operations November 1
- Tenants started moving in November 1

Hawkins Street/Dell Avenue

- Public Information Session was held November 12, 2019
- Second submission of Site Plan Drawings submitted to the City of Niagara Falls
- Site Plan Agreement scheduled for approval in January 2020
- Development meeting scheduled for January 7, 2020
- Class B Cost Report for development scheduled to commence mid-January

Q4 (October 1 to December 31, 2019)

- Six of 12 housing units have been demolished, removal of debris in progress – scheduled to be complete at the end of January 2020
- Detail development of drawings are approximately 60% complete
- Construction of project is scheduled to begin in spring 2020

Additional New Development

Investment in Affordable Housing-Extension (IAH-E), Year 2 funding has been allocated to three non-profit organizations and will result in the creation of 40 units for seniors and mental health consumers in Niagara:

	Amount	Units
Gateway Residences of Niagara, Huron Street, Niagara Falls COMPLETE	\$720,000	9
Thorold Municipal Non-Profit, Ormond Street, Thorold COMPLETE	\$1,228,912	14
Stamford Kiwanis, Barker Street, Niagara Falls COMPLETE	\$1,089,088	17
TOTAL	\$3,038,000	40

Stamford Kiwanis

- Substantial completion November 22, 2019

5. Service Manager Responsibilities

APPEALS:

In Q4, **11 appeals** were heard (one less than in 2018-Q4).

- Seven related to ongoing RGI eligibility
 - Two Housing Provider appeals for failure to notify of changes (guests) – one UPHELD, one OVERTURNED
 - Four for failure to provide information – three UPHELD (one with conditions), one OVERTURNED
 - One overhoused household for refusing final offer – OVERTURNED
- Four for decisions made by Housing Access
 - One Urgent Status – OVERTURNED
 - One overhoused household (Market-RGI policy) – OVERTURNED
 - Two extra bedroom – UPHELD

	2018-Q4	2019-Q1	2019-Q2	2019-Q3	2019-Q4
# of appeals	12	10	12	10	11

Q4 (October 1 to December 31, 2019)

6. Housing Access Centre & Centralized Waiting List

APPLICATION ACTIVITY:

# of Applications Received & Processed	741	# of Eligible Applications	707
# of Special Provincial Priority Status Applications	103	# of Ineligible Applications	34
# of Urgent Status Applications	130	# of Cancelled Applications	238
# of Homeless Status Applications	158	# of Applicants Housed	156

In Q4, **238 households were removed** from the Centralized Waiting List because they were no longer eligible, they found alternate housing or we were unable to make contact.

Q4 (October 1 to December 31, 2019)

CENTRALIZED WAITING LIST:

		2018- Q4	2019- Q1	2019- Q2	2019- Q3	2019- Q4
		# of households				
A	Rent-Geared-to-Income (RGI) waiting list:					
	Niagara resident RGI waiting list	4,616	4,715	4,926	5,012	5,154
	Applicants from outside of Niagara	761	793	849	897	977
	TOTAL RGI waiting list:	5,377	5,508	5,775	5,909	6,131
	Housing Allowance: a set allowance to help applicants on the waiting list with affordability in the private market until housed in an RGI unit	639	704	742	747	742
A1	RGI waiting list demographics:					
	Seniors	2,218	2,257	2,344	2,362	2,455
	Adults no dependents	1,761	1,805	1,881	1,922	1,979
	Adults with dependents	1,398	1,446	1,550	1,625	1,697
A2	RGI list further segmented (#'s included in A & A1):					
	SPP – Special Provincial Priority (Ministry Priority): helps victims of violence separate permanently from their abuser	131	128	148	165	148
	URG – Urgent (Local Priority): for applicants with mobility barriers and/or extreme hardship where their current accommodation puts them at extreme risk and/or causes hardship	116	117	109	130	142
	HML – Homeless (Local Priority): provides increased opportunity for placement to homeless households	954	971	1,012	1,007	1,075
	SUP – Supportive/Transitional: provides targeted, provisional services to assist individuals to transition beyond basic needs to more permanent housing	13	15	11	12	16
B	In addition, NRH manages:					
	Overhoused: households who are living in subsidized accommodation with more bedrooms than they are eligible for	168	180	176	181	174
	Transfer: households who are currently living in subsidized accommodation and have requested a transfer to another provider	535	564	573	603	613
	TOTAL RGI households on waiting list managed by NRH:	6,080	6,252	6,524	6,693	6,918
C	NRH maintains a waiting list for market rent units (62 Non-Profit Housing Programs):					
	Market: applicants who have applied for a market rent unit in the Non-Profit Housing Programs portfolio	647	667	723	752	784
	TOTAL households on waiting list managed by NRH:	6,727	6,919	7,274	7,445	7,702
	TOTAL individuals on waiting list managed by NRH:	11,488	11,884	12,577	13,059	13,587

Note: the above chart includes only those who apply to the Centralized Waiting List and does not capture the full number of those in need of affordable housing in Niagara.

Q4 (October 1 to December 31, 2019)**ESTIMATED WAIT TIMES:**

CITY	SENIORS Age 55 and older		SINGLES Age 16-54		HOUSEHOLDS WITH DEPENDENTS			
	Bachelor	1 Bed	Bachelor	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed	5 Bed
	Y E A R S							
Fort Erie	-	10	3	10	2	2	5	-
Grimsby	-	5	-	-	-	-	-	-
Lincoln	-	4	-	9	10	9	-	-
Niagara Falls	5	6	-	17	8	3	11	15
Niagara-on-the-Lake	-	5.5	-	-	-	-	-	-
Pelham	-	10	-	-	-	-	-	-
Port Colborne	-	5	-	11	4	4	3	-
St. Catharines	-	6.5	9	13	3.5	4	10	11
Thorold	-	9	-	11	6	10	-	-
Welland	-	5.5	6	15	7	2.5	7	6
West Lincoln	-	4.5	-	-	7	5	-	-

no units of this size available in this community

January 2019

Please note:

- wait time information can fluctuate and is an approximation only
- wait times may not reflect the actual time one may wait for affordable housing

A	<p>AFFORDABLE HOUSING RENTS: Rents are established at 80% market of Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) Average Market Rent, with no ongoing rental subsidy.</p> <p>APPEALS: Social Housing tenants/members can request reviews of decisions related to applicant eligibility, priority status, transfer requests, overhoused status, ongoing Rent-Geared-to-Income (RGI) eligibility and rent calculation issues. The NRH Appeal Committee makes decisions on appeals from applicants and tenants in Public Housing, Social Housing (where they have not established an Appeal Committee) and Rent Supplement units. All appeal decisions are final, per legislation.</p> <p>ARREARS: To assist with arrears collection, tenants/members are provided the option of entering into a repayment agreement but are still expected to pay full rent on time.</p>
B	
C	<p>CANADA-ONTARIO COMMUNITY HOUSING INITIATIVE (COCHI): A program that provides funding to protect affordability for households in social housing, support the repair and renewal of existing social housing supply and expand the supply of community housing over time.</p> <p>CAPITAL PROGRAM: Responsible for maintaining the Public Housing (NRH-owned) asset and planning for future sustainability, as well as issuing tenders for service contracts.</p> <p>CENTRALIZED WAITING LIST: Is comprised of almost 200 subsidiary lists of Public Housing, Social Housing and private units through the Rent Supplement program. It is maintained on a modified chronological basis (i.e. in order to ensure that applicants are treated fairly, units are offered based on the date of application). The needs of particularly at-risk populations are addressed through Priority Status groups that are offered units before other applicants on the Centralized Waiting List:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special Provincial Priority (SPP) Status • Urgent Status • Homeless Status <p>The <i>Housing Services Act, 2011</i> (HSA) requires that the Centralized Waiting List is reviewed on a regular basis. Applicants are asked to confirm their continued interest and to update information annually (# of household members, total household income) so that NRH can verify ongoing eligibility for housing subsidy. If a household is no longer interested or is deemed ineligible the application is cancelled and removed from the list.</p> <p>The Centralized Waiting List includes various types of households (i.e. families, seniors and singles/adults without dependents) from both within and outside Niagara, the priority groups mentioned above, RGI and Market applicants and existing tenants who are overhoused (have more bedrooms than they need).</p> <p>COMMUNITY HOUSING: Housing owned and operated by non-profit, co-operatives and municipal governments or district social services administration boards including subsidized or low-end-of market rents.</p>

Quarterly Report Reference Sheet

	COMMUNITY PROGRAMS: NRH's community partners offer events, presentations, activities and programs to help mitigate the effects of poverty by building community pride, offering life skills training and enhancing the lives of the tenants. While NRH does not deliver these services directly to tenants, NRH's Community Resource Unit facilitates partnerships by identifying evolving community and tenant needs, connecting with appropriate programs and supporting their ongoing success.
D	
E	END OF OPERATING AGREEMENTS (EOA): EOA refers to the expiry of federally signed operating agreements. NRH is working with these providers to find innovative solutions to maintain the existing number of social housing units in Niagara and protect existing tenants/members from losing subsidy.
	END OF MORTGAGE (EOM): Federal/provincial and provincial housing providers (non-profits and co-ops) legislated under the Housing Services Act (HSA) do not have operating agreements that expire when the mortgage matures. The relationship between service manager and housing provider continues with the housing provider still obliged to follow the HSA. The obligation of service manager to pay a mortgage subsidy ends.
	EVICTIION PREVENTION/SUPPORT: Supports to help NRH tenants stay in their homes through identification of tenant needs and connection with supports and services (e.g. Mental health issues, cognitive decline, addiction, family breakdown etc.)
F	
G	
	HOMEOWNERSHIP PROGRAM – "WELCOME HOME NIAGARA": The Homeownership program assists low-to-moderate income rental households to purchase their first home by providing a down payment loan. The loan is forgivable after 20 years if the household remains in the home.
	HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS ACTION PLAN (HHAP): Niagara's 10-year Community Action Plan to help everyone in Niagara have a home.
	HOUSING ACCESS CENTRE: Housing Access is the gateway to affordable housing in Niagara. All applications for housing are processed through the Housing Access Centre including initial and ongoing eligibility assessment as well as management of the Centralized Waiting List. Options include accommodation with Non-profit and Co-operative housing providers (Social Housing), NRH owned units (Public Housing and two mixed income communities), or for-profit/private landlord owned buildings (Rent Supplement/Housing Allowance).
	HOUSING ALLOWANCE PROGRAM: A variation of the Rent Supplement program that provides a set allowance of up to \$300 per month to private landlords to assist applicants who are on the Centralized Waiting List.
	HOUSING FIRST: Helps people move quickly from homelessness to their own home by providing supports to help difficult to house individuals find and keep housing. NRH partners with Niagara Region Community Services and community agencies to provide rent supplement to landlords while agency staff provide a range of personalized supports to encourage successful tenancies and, if the tenant chooses, address personal challenges.

Quarterly Report Reference Sheet

I	IN-SITU RENT SUPPLEMENT PROGRAM: A program developed to engage new landlords and offer applicants on the Centralized Waiting List an opportunity to receive Rent-Geared-to-Income assistance where they currently live. This removes the need for moving related expenses and broadens the network of landlords in business with NRH.
	INVESTMENT IN AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROGRAM – EXTENSION (IAH-E): Provincial and federally funded program designed to improve access to affordable housing that is safe and suitable, while assisting local economies through job creation generated by new development and home repairs/modifications, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Niagara Renovates • Homeownership (Welcome Home Niagara) • Rent Supplement/Housing Allowance • Rental Housing (New Development)
J	
K	
L	LOCAL HOUSING CORPORATION (LHC): Also called “Public Housing”, LHC refers to the communities that Niagara Regional Housing owns and manages.
M	
N	NIAGARA RENOVATES PROGRAM: Provides assistance to low-to-moderate income homeowners for home repairs, accessibility modifications and the creation of secondary suites in single family homes. Assistance is provided in the form of a forgivable loan, written off over a 10-year period, as long as the homeowner continues to live in the home.
	NON PROFIT HOUSING PROGRAMS (FORMERLY “SOCIAL HOUSING”): Includes Non-Profit and Cooperative Housing Providers, who own and manage their own housing communities and have their own independent Boards. NRH provides legislative oversight to ensure they are in compliance with the <i>Housing Services Act (HSA)</i> . Generally, 25% of these units are designated as market rent units. The remaining 75% of units are offered to households on the Centralized Waiting List that pay RGI.
O	ONTARIO PRIORITIES HOUSING INITIATIVE (OPHI): A program to address local housing priorities, including affordability, repair and new construction.
	OPERATIONAL REVIEWS: In order to ensure that Non-Profit Housing Programs comply with legislation and local policies, NRH investigates their overall health by analyzing many factors including finances, vacancy losses, governance issues, condition of buildings etc. NRH then works with them to bring them into compliance and provide recommendations on best business practices.
P	PORTABLE HOUSING ALLOWANCE: Direct financial assistance given to the household (tenant) on the Centralized Waiting List; not tied to a housing unit.
	PRIORITY STATUS GROUPS: Priority Status groups are offered units before other applicants on the Centralized Waiting List: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special Provincial Priority (SPP) Status is the only legislated priority and is intended to help victims of violence separate permanently from their abuser • Urgent Status is intended for applicants with (1) Mobility Barriers (i.e. physical limitations that require barrier-free units) and/or (2) Extreme Hardship (i.e.

Quarterly Report Reference Sheet

	<p>where the applicants' current accommodations puts them at extreme risk and/or causes hardship and relocation would reduce the risks and/or alleviate the hardship</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homeless Status provides an increased opportunity for placement to households that are homeless (1 in every 10 households offered housing)
	<p>PUBLIC HOUSING (ALSO CALLED "LOCAL HOUSING CORPORATION"): NRH owns and manages 2,660 units of Public Housing stock in 9 of the 12 Niagara municipalities. Tenants pay 30% of their income for rent. <i>*Note: NRH owns and manages an additional 91 units that have affordable (80% market) and market rents.</i></p>
Q	
R	<p>RENT SUPPLEMENT PROGRAM: Tenants pay 30% of their gross monthly income directly to the private landlord and NRH subsidizes the difference up to the agreed market rent for the unit. <i>*See also Housing Allowance Program and Housing First Project.</i></p>
S	<p>SERVICE LEVEL STANDARDS (SLS): Establishes minimum number of RGI and special needs units to be maintained by each service manager</p> <p>SERVICE MANAGER: As administrator for affordable housing on behalf of Niagara Region, NRH's main responsibilities include: administering Rent Supplement Programs, oversight of Non-Profit and Cooperative Housing Providers, determining RGI eligibility, maintaining Centralized Waiting List, establishing Local Policies etc.</p> <p>SOCIAL HOUSING (FORMERLY "AFFORDABLE HOUSING"): All NRH programs and services, including Public Housing (NRH-owned), Non-Profit Housing Programs, the Rent Supplement Program and the Affordable Housing Program</p>
T	
U	
V	
W	<p>WELCOME HOME NIAGARA: Assists low-to-moderate income rental households to purchase their first home by providing a down payment loan. The loan is forgivable after 20 years if the household remains in the home.</p>
X	
Y	
Z	



Mailing Address:
P.O. Box 344
Thorold ON L2V 3Z3

Street Address:
Campbell East
1815 Sir Isaac Brock Way
Thorold ON

Phone: 905-682-9201
Toll Free: 1-800-232-3292
(from Grimsby and beyond Niagara region only)

Main Fax: 905-687-4844
Fax – Applications: 905-935-0476
Fax – Contractors: 905-682-8301
Web site: www.nrh.ca

February 14, 2020

Ann-Marie Norio, Regional Clerk
Niagara Region
1815 Sir Isaac Brock Way
Thorold, ON L2V 4T7

Dear Ms. Norio,

At their February 14, 2020 meeting, the Niagara Regional Housing Board of Directors received the following information as attached in the report NRH 4-2020:

That Regulation Changes – Communications Plan and Flyer that will be used as the initial communications tool to summarize the new rules be FORWARDED to the Public Health and Social Services Committee for information.

Also included is a draft letter that will be sent to all applicants on the waiting list.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Walter Sendzik", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Mayor Walter Sendzik
Chair

**Niagara Regional Housing**

1815 Sir Isaac Brock Way, PO Box 344, Thorold, ON L2V 3Z3
Telephone: 905-682-9201 Toll-free: 1-800-232-3292
Main Fax: 905-687-4844 Contractor Fax: 905-682-8301
nrh.ca

MEMORANDUM

Date: March 10, 2020

To: Niagara Region Public Health and Social Services Committee

From: Donna Woiceshyn, CEO, Niagara Regional Housing

Subject: Regulation Changes – Housing Services Act

Councillors should be aware of changes that will be affecting applicants and tenants due to changes in regulations under the *Housing Services Act, 2011*. Through these legislative changes, the Province is seeking to “improve waiting lists, create safer communities and simplify Rent-Geared-to-Income (RGI) rules”.¹

The following is an overview of the new regulations:

1. Rent Calculations – Rent calculations will become annual based on 30% of net household income. Currently, rent is recalculated whenever there is a change in income and is based on gross household income. Other changes include the exemption of full-time students from rent calculations. **NRH will implement this change effective July 1, 2021.**
2. Refusal of Offers –Households will have to accept the first unit they are offered. Currently, applicants can refuse two offers from their own choices from the building selection list. The amendment allows Service Managers to determine that a household remain eligible if there are extenuating circumstances. **This change will be effective July 1, 2020.**
3. Previous Convictions – Housing providers are now able to refuse to re-house households if there has been a previous eviction due to illegal activity and they have reasonable grounds to believe the household would pose a risk to others in the community. Currently, housing providers can only refuse to re-house if there is the offence was related to their Rent-Geared-to-Income subsidy. **The Province made this change effective immediately on September 23, 2019.**
4. Transfers – Service Managers now have the ability to determine how to manage transfers. Currently, transfers are not permitted between housing providers. **NRH has decided to maintain this practice.**

¹ MMAH Briefing, Oct. 16, 2019

In order to ensure applicants and tenants are aware of and understand these changes, NRH is mailing all applicants the attached letter and will include relevant information in future communications. The full Communications Plan for the regulation changes is included in the NRH Board Report 20-187-3.5

Date

Applicant Name

Address

Address

**Important Changes to Your Application for Housing
- Please read the information below carefully -**

As of July 1, 2020, there will be new rules under the Housing Services Act, 2011 that will affect your application on the Centralized Waiting List for Rent-Geared-to-Income (RGI) housing.

New Rules

Starting July 1, 2020, you will receive one (1) RGI housing offer. If you refuse the one(1) offer, your application will be cancelled and your file will be closed. Since this is a new rule, any housing offers you refused before July 1, 2020 will not count towards your one (1) offer.

When you choose the locations where you want to live, you must select units that have the appropriate number of bedrooms for your household. If you do not make the selections yourself, NRH will add **all** housing communities with appropriate size units to your application.

Keep Your Application Up to Date

Please remember that you must keep the information on your application up to date. This includes:

- Your contact information (address, telephone number, email address)
- An alternate contact if you are unable to be contacted directly
- Your housing choices (the locations where you want to live)
- Any special requirements
- Your email address, if you have one (housing offers can be made through email)

When you receive a housing offer, you will have two (2) business days to respond to the offer. If you cannot be reached at your own phone number, please provide another number where we can reach you.

Review Current Housing Choices on Your Application

Since you will receive only one housing offer after July 1, 2020, it is important to review the housing choices you made on your application. If you do not make any changes to your housing application, the current communities that you selected will be used.

If you have any questions or need help with your application for housing, please call your Eligibility Assessment Representative at 905-682-9201.

Sincerely,

Housing Access Centre
Niagara Regional Housing

**Please call 905-682-9201 if you need this information in a different format
or translated into another language.**

MEMORANDUM

Date: February 14, 2020

To: Niagara Regional Housing Board of Directors

From: Wendy Thompson, Manager Community Resource Unit

Subject: Regulation Changes – Communications Plan and flyer for initial communications

Further to *Memo 19-185-2.7* regarding amendments to regulations under the *Housing Services Act, 2011*, please see the attached (1) Communications Plan and (2) flyer that will be used as the initial communications tool to summarize the new rules.

Flyer Audience:

- NRH staff
- NRH Board of Directors
- Applicants
- Tenants
- Housing Providers
- Partners

Flyer Distribution:

- NRH will do a mass mail out to tenants and also include the flyer when the Housing Herald newsletters and Income Declaration packages are delivered
- The NRH Translation Document will be sent to tenants with the flyer to ensure those who do not speak English know it is important information that they need to have translated
- The flyer will also be posted on the NRH website and in the front reception area
- Partners and housing providers will receive the flyer by email

As we proceed, staff will continue to update the Communications Plan and bring relevant information with respect to communications and policy changes to the Board as necessary.

Attached: Communication Plan for Changes to HSA regulations
Flyer - *Regulation Changes IMPORTANT!*

HSA Regulation Changes - NRH Communications Plan

COM-C 6-2020

NRH 4-2020
20-187-3.5.ATT1
February 14, 2020
Page 1 of 2

Notes:

- website to be updated on an ongoing basis
- ALL Audiences to receive "IMPORTANT!" flyer right away via mail or email (*include transfer info for staff/providers)

Area of Change	Regulation Change(s)	NRH Effective Date	Audience	Communications	Communication Dates
Community Safety (previous convictions)	Amendment to Ontario Regulation 367/11 under the Housing Services Act, 2011 that allows housing providers to refuse to offer a unit to a household based on a previous eviction for serious illegal activity.	23-Sep-19	Tenants	Income Declaration packages	Mailed on 25th of each month
				Housing Herald	Spring/summer version
			Staff	NRH Today	February 2020
			Providers	Send Notice after policy updates	TBD
			Board	Memos w/ updates	As necessary
				Final approval of policies (local rules)	TBD
			PAC/TAC	Put on meeting agendas	*waiting for 2020 meeting dates
Transfers <i>NOTE: NRH is not changing how transfers are handled</i>	Amendment to Ontario Regulation 367/11 under the Housing Services Act, 2011 related to tenant transfers between different housing providers in the same Service Manager service area.	01-Jan-20	Partners	Email	
			Staff	NRH Today	February 2020
			Providers	Send Notice after policy update	TBD
			Board	Memos w/ updates	As necessary
Refusal of Offers, Selections and Overhoused	Amendments to Ontario Regulation 367/11 under the Housing Services Act, 2011 including a new provincial eligibility rule on refusal of offers, rules on household preferences for a housing project and changes to a Service Manager's authority to make a local rule where a household ceases to meet occupancy standards.	01-Jul-20	Applicants	Letter to all applicants	February 2020
				Posters in front reception/OW offices/211	May 2020
			Tenants	Income Declaration packages	Mailed on 25th of each month
				Housing Herald	Spring/summer version
			Staff	NRH Today	February 2020
			Providers	Send Notice after policy update	TBD
			Board	Memos w/ updates	As necessary
				Final approval of policies (local rules)	TBD
			PAC/TAC	Put on meeting agendas	*waiting for 2020 meeting dates
			Partners	Email	

Updated: February 5, 2020

COM-C 6-2020
HSA Regulation Changes - NRH Communications Plan

NRH 4-2020
 20-187-3.5.ATT1
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Area of Change	Regulation Change(s)	NRH Effective Date	Audience	Communications	Communication Dates
RGI calculations	Ontario Regulation 298/01 replaced with new Ontario Regulation 316/19 “Determination of Geared-to-Income Rent under Section 50 of the Act” under the Housing Services Act, 2011 (HSA) to simplify the calculation of Rent-Geared-to-Income (RGI) assistance. Amendments to Ontario Regulation 367/11 “General” under the HSA to support RGI simplification.	01-Jul-21	Tenants	Income Declaration packages	Mailed on 25th of each month
				Housing Herald	Spring/summer version
			Staff	NRH Today	February 2020
			Providers	Send Notice after policy update	TBD
			Board	Memos w/ updates	As necessary
				Final approval of policies (local rules)	TBD
			PAC/TAC	Put on meeting agendas	*waiting for 2020 meeting dates
			Partners	Email	



IMPORTANT!



Rules are changing...

Subject	NEW Rule	When?	Who does this affect and how?
Rent Calculations	Rent calculations will be annual based on 30% of net household income, determined by your Notice of Assessment.	July 1, 2021	Applies to tenants
			Every year with your Annual Income Declaration package, you must provide NRH with your Notice of Assessment (from your completed taxes). If your income decreases, you may request one in-year review. Your rent will only change if your income has decreased 20% or more.
Community Safety	A household may be denied a unit if a member of the household was previously evicted for illegal activity (within the last five years).	September 23, 2019	Applies to tenants & applicants
			You will not be affected if you have not been evicted for illegal activity.
Refusal of Offer	Applicants on the Centralized Waiting List will only receive one (1) offer of Rent-Geared-to-Income housing.	July 1, 2020	Applies to applicants
			Beginning July 1, 2020, you must accept the one (1) offer of Rent-Geared-to-Income housing you receive or your application on the waiting list will be cancelled and your file will be closed. **please review the housing preferences you chose on your application.



If you have questions, please call 905-682-9201 or check nrh.ca

MEMORANDUM**COM-C 7-2020****Subject: 2019-RFP-300 – Assertive Street Outreach Request for Proposal Award Results****Date: March 10, 2020****To: Public Health and Social Services Committee****From: Adrienne Jugley, Commissioner, Community Services**

The review of 2019-RFP-300 – Assertive Street Outreach was conducted as outlined in COM 29-2019 for the funding period April 1, 2020 to March 31, 2023. The selection process was undertaken by an Evaluation Review Committee, which included an external community member, and staff members from Niagara Region Public Health, Finance and Community Services. Niagara Regional staff have now completed negotiations of 2019-RFP-300 – Assertive Street Outreach, and the results of the evaluation of proposals are as follows:

Successful agencies:

1. Gateway Residential & Community Support Services of Niagara Inc.
2. Niagara Resource Service for Youth (The RAFT)
3. Port Colborne Community Association for Resource Extensions (Port Cares)

These successful agencies will work with Niagara Region to actively engage individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness to promote, connect, and coordinate access to the range of supports available across Niagara's Homeless-Serving System, including emergency shelter, housing and support services. Assertive Street Outreach proactively engages and responds to requests in the community for individuals in public spaces, who, for example, may be 'sleeping rough' or living outdoors (e.g. sleeping in a car, living in an encampment etc.). Outreach workers are focused on ending the experience of homelessness, particularly for those who would otherwise be underserved in traditional settings. Additionally, the selected agencies will provide a centralized service for after-hours access to Niagara's Homeless-Servicing system.

Street-based outreach ensures that trained workers respond directly and immediately to a person's needs by bringing coordinated services from across the Homeless-Serving System to the individual, rather than waiting for them to seek services on their own.

These services aim to:

- Proactively engage with people sleeping rough to facilitate pathways into housing
- Minimize the harmful effects of rough sleeping while working towards long-term housing solutions
- Provide standardized intake, triage, and assessment to assess a person's vulnerability and assist in the identification of appropriate housing resources
- Deliver case coordination in collaboration with government and non-profit organizations to support those who may be reluctant to access traditional services
- Provide an intensive and coordinated team approach to identify and work towards personal goals.

Committee is receiving this memo for information as the awarded value of this RFP falls within staff's delegated authority as per the Procurement By-Law. Niagara Region negotiated with three agencies to ensure standardized levels of service, training opportunities for staff and to be able to award agencies within the 2020 approved budget.

Respectfully submitted and signed by:

Adrienne Jugley, MSW, RSW, CHE
Commissioner

MEMORANDUM

COM-C 8-2020

Subject: 2019-RFP-310 – Housing with Supports – Housing First Request for Proposal Award Results
Date: March 10, 2020
To: Public Health and Social Services Committee
From: Adrienne Jugley, Commissioner, Community Services

The review of 2019-RFP-310 – Housing with Supports – Housing First was conducted as outlined in COM 29-2019 for the funding period April 1, 2020 to March 31, 2023. The selection process was undertaken by an Evaluation Review Committee, which included representation from another municipal service system manager and staff members from Niagara Regional Housing, Niagara Region Public Health, Finance and Community Services. Niagara Regional staff have now completed negotiations of 2019-RFP-310 – Housing with Supports – Housing First, and the results of the evaluation of proposals are as follows:

Successful agency:

Gateway Residential & Community Support Services of Niagara Inc.

The successful agency is a lead agency in a consortium with two other agencies (Southridge Community Church and Niagara Resource Service for Youth (The RAFT)). This results in one award with one contract for this service area. This agency is also the successful lead agency in a consortium with the same two agencies (Southridge Community Church and Niagara Resource Service for Youth (The RAFT)) for the Home for Good (intensive supportive housing) service area. This allows for seamless transfers between the two programs as levels of support needed for individuals often changes over time.

The successful agency will work with Niagara Region to provide a recovery-oriented approach to ending homelessness that centers on quickly moving people experiencing homelessness into independent and permanent housing and providing additional supports and services as needed.

The successful agency will support individuals experiencing chronic and/or episodic homelessness with mid to high acuity of need to obtain and retain stable housing. This will also help to reduce pressure on Niagara's shelter system, and alleviate pressures in other areas of Niagara's health and social service system (e.g. emergency room visits.).

The successful agency will identify goals, assess needs, work with support services and participants to develop personal support and housing plans. This will enable clients to retain their housing and increase their quality of life.

Committee is receiving this memo for information as the awarded value of this RFP falls within staff's delegated authority as per the Procurement By-Law. Consistent with the Negotiated RFP process, Niagara Region staff negotiated with the top ranked agency to ensure standardized levels of service, training opportunities for staff and to be able to award agencies within the 2020 approved budget.

Respectfully submitted and signed by:

Adrienne Jugley, MSW, RSW, CHE
Commissioner

MEMORANDUM

COM-C 9-2020

Subject: 2019-RFP-311 – Housing with Supports – Home for Good Request for Proposal Award Results

Date: March 10, 2020

To: Public Health and Social Services Committee

From: Adrienne Jugley, Commissioner, Community Services

The review of 2019-RFP-311 – Housing with Supports – Home for Good was conducted as outlined in COM 29-2019 for the funding period April 1, 2020 to March 31, 2023. The selection process was undertaken by an Evaluation Review Committee, which included representation from another municipal service system manager and staff members from Niagara Region Public Health, Finance and Community Services. Niagara Region staff have now completed negotiations of 2019-RFP-311 – Housing with Supports – Home for Good, and the results of the evaluation of proposals are as follows:

Successful agency:

Gateway Residential & Community Support Services of Niagara Inc.

The successful agency is a lead agency in a consortium with two other agencies (Southridge Community Church and Niagara Resource Service for Youth (The RAFT)). This results in one award with one contract for this service area. This agency is also the successful lead agency in a consortium with same two agencies (Southridge Community Church and Niagara Resource Service for Youth (The RAFT)) for the Housing First service area. This allows for seamless transfers between the two programs as levels of support required for individuals often changes over time, resulting in transitions between program areas.

The successful agency will work with Niagara Region to support individuals with complex needs to achieve and maintain housing stability, and to more generally advance the Province of Ontario's goal of ending chronic homelessness by 2025, through the provision of supportive housing for individuals within the provincial 'Home for Good' priority homelessness areas:

- Chronically Homeless
- Youth homelessness (aged 16-24 years)
- Indigenous homelessness

- Homelessness following transitions from provincially-funded institutions and service systems (e.g., hospitals, corrections, foster care/child protection).

The agency will support individuals experiencing chronic homelessness with high acuity of need to obtain and retain stable housing. This will also help to reduce pressure on Niagara's shelter system, and alleviate pressures in other areas of Niagara's health and social service system (e.g. emergency room visits.).

The successful agency will identify goals, assess needs, work with support services and participants to develop personal support and housing plans. This will enable clients to retain their housing and increase their quality of life.

Committee is receiving this memo for information as the awarded value of this RFP falls within staff's delegated authority as per the Procurement By-Law. Consistent with the Negotiated RFP process, Niagara Region staff negotiated with the top ranked proponent to ensure standardized levels of service, training opportunities for staff and to be able to award agencies within the 2020 approved budget.

Respectfully submitted and signed by

Adrienne Jugley, MSW, RSW, CHE
Commissioner