
Subject: Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative Investment Plan 2019-20

Report to: Public Health and Social Services Committee

Report date: Tuesday, January 8, 2019

Recommendations

That the Ministry mandated Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative investment plan for the 2019-20 funding allotment **BE APPROVED**.

Key Facts

- The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) provided notification on November 2, 2016 of funding allocations for the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI) which included the year 2019-20.
- Based on the November 2, 2016 notice Niagara will receive \$7,847,786 for the term April 1, 2019 through March 31, 2020.
- Consistent with previous years, MMAH requires service managers to submit the CHPI investment plan for 2019-20 by February 15, 2019 outlining the planned spending in the directed categories of: emergency shelter solutions, housing with related supports, other services and supports, homelessness prevention and program administration.
- The proposed Investment Plan included in the report has been developed based on the CHPI program guidelines (January 2017), alignment with Niagara's Ten Year Housing and Homelessness Action Plan and consideration to existing funding allocations to support a stable homelessness system in Niagara.
- In 2017, homelessness services in Niagara assisted 351 unique households through outreach, 950 with emergency energy funds, 1,641 with emergency hostel services, 2,785 with prevention services and 444 with supported transitional housing.
- Final confirmation of funding allocations is not anticipated to be received until March 2019, as part of the Provincial budget approval process.
- Should the additional funding of \$311,353 (the proposed increase over 2018-19) not be available from the Province, the Region will make adjustments within the Prevention program area to offset the emergency shelter funding pressure.

Financial Considerations

The total 100% provincial CHPI funding provided for 2019-20 is anticipated to be \$7,847,786. It should also be noted that the Region allocates \$1.7M of levy funding to the same priority funding categories beyond the proposed provincial amounts (Emergency shelter \$586,094; Housing with related supports \$50,149; Other services \$0; Prevention \$921,449; and Administration \$145,869, assuming a consistent levy

allocation in Q1 2020). The Region also receives \$714,705 of Federal funding for homelessness efforts (Housing with related supports (Housing First) \$635,110 and Administration \$79,595). These other funding sources are not included in the CHPI investment plan prepared for the MMAH.

Current homelessness service contracts expire March 31, 2020. Niagara Region funds and works collaboratively with 22 agencies in the region to deliver homelessness services to the residents of Niagara.

Analysis

The proposed CHPI investment plan is designed to align with the CHPI program guidelines issued in January 2017. The Ministry requires that an investment plan be submitted each year indicating how the Region plans to use the funding provided based on the categories identified by the province, and additionally, recognizing the four provincial homelessness priorities of chronic homelessness, youth, indigenous persons and homelessness following transitions from provincially-funded institutions and service systems.

The vision for CHPI is to have:

“A coordinated and holistic service delivery system that is people-centered, evidence informed and outcomes-based, and reflects a housing first approach that focuses on homelessness prevention and reduces reliance on emergency services.”¹

This vision reflects a shift towards a system that focuses on proactive and permanent housing solutions rather than reactive responses to homelessness.

The chart below shows the funding plan submitted for 2017-18, 2018-19, the proposed plan to be submitted for 2019-20 and the changes in funding allocations, over the prior year.

2019-20 CHPI INVESTMENT PLAN				
	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	Change
Emergency Shelter Solutions	\$2,065,228	\$2,186,223	\$2,421,799	\$235,576
Housing with Related Supports	\$1,255,867	\$1,071,155	\$956,155	\$(115,000)
Other Services and Supports	\$141,109	\$178,592	\$314,016	\$135,424

¹ Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative Program Guidelines, January 2017, Ministry of Housing.

	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	Change
Homelessness Prevention	\$3,530,628	\$3,811,701	\$3,867,054	\$55,353
Program Administration	\$232,512	\$288,762	\$288,762	\$0
Total	\$7,225,344	\$7,536,433	\$7,847,786	\$311,353

The relative amounts set out in Niagara’s investment plan align with provincial expectations, and also ensure funding levels in each category support stability in the Niagara homelessness system while allowing for the capacity to move the system forward achieving provincially identified priorities. Funding allocations in each service area reflect the outcome of the 2017 Expression of Interest procurement process allocating 52 contracts to 22 agencies. The types of services that will be funded under the CHPI categories, as well as some specific work, related to system improvements, are outlined below:

Emergency Shelter Solutions

- Funding would support: a safe bed, offered in a variety of settings; necessary basic needs, meals, along with support services including transportation to the shelter and assistance to secure stable housing.
- Funding increase provides dollars for Niagara Falls Out of the Cold Pilot, increased number of beds in the shelter system and additional funding for hotel rooms to address Emergency Shelter overflow, emergency situations and addressing special needs (e.g. accessibility, service animals and health and safety).
- Staff continue to monitor the impact of the implementation of best practice Housing First and Home for Good Supportive Housing programming on shelter stays with an effort to reduce demand for emergency shelters.
- There will be continued focus and effort to align with Provincial policy expectations, emphasizing prevention over emergency response.

Housing with Related Supports

- Funding will continue to support Housing First units and transitional housing programming in Niagara.
- Supports also include medical needs and other supports that are not otherwise available to ensure well-being of clients. Examples include: supports related to mental health, substance use, medical assistance and crisis intervention.

Other Services and Supports

- This category captures Niagara’s outreach services, including outreach support workers who provide help to find stable housing, supplies, and connections to other services including mental health programs, healthcare, addictions services,

and legal aid. This category also includes the mobile food truck that serves all of Niagara on a rotating schedule and provides, outreach, free meals and supplies.

Homelessness Prevention

- Homelessness Prevention funding supports programs which address eviction prevention, assistance to secure and retain housing and assistance with budgeting, banking and trusteeship.
- This category also funds programs specific to vulnerable youth and young adults who are at risk of homelessness to keep them housed and avert their entry into the system.
- This category includes the Housing Stability Plan (HSP) which, as in prior years, will represent \$1.8 million of the CHPI funding available in Homelessness Prevention. HSP provides financial assistance for rent arrears, and rent deposits.
- This category also includes funding towards the Niagara Emergency Energy Fund to address utility arrears, to support clients to retain housing.
- Niagara, in alignment with provincial direction, continues to emphasize prevention programs to reduce the need for emergency shelters and support people to access and retain stable housing.

Program Administration

- This includes capacity building and training funding for all 22 agencies.
- While permitted under the Administration category, Niagara does not allocate the full 10% available under the CHPI guidelines for administration, focusing as much funds as possible to direct client service delivery.

Risk Management planning for CHPI

Under the CHPI program guidelines (January 2017), there is a requirement to identify potential risks and mitigation strategies.

The risks that will be identified in this investment plan include:

RISKS	MITIGATION
➤ Effectively meeting the capacity, assessment and development requirements for municipal service managers and all third party agencies delivering programs on our behalf (particularly as the Province has not yet shared expectations and targets for this requirement).	➤ Continue to monitor the sector for best practice developments and evolving policy changes. ➤ Continue to allocate administration monies to this initiative and work with all agencies to identify system wide training needs, ensuring system capacity along with standard processes. Plans for 2019 include further Housing First training.
➤ An affordability risk in Niagara, as the provincial funding available remains inadequate to support local needs and	➤ Local funding allocations and contract award processes seek to ensure that selected agencies utilize outcome-

address existing demand for services. Ongoing reliance on the local not-for-profit sector contributions and levy sources is not sustainable.	based models and best practices. Niagara will continue to ensure effective monitoring of contracts and outcomes. Dialogue will continue with the MMAH related to local needs and relative funding levels.
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Alternatives Reviewed

Not applicable.

Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities

N/A

Other Pertinent Reports

- COM 08-2015 Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative Funding Allocations 2015-16 and 2016-17
- COM 02-2017 Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative Investment Plan 2017-18
- COM 02-2108 Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative Investment Plan 2018-19

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