
Subject: Appointment to the Community Advisory Board (CAB) for Homelessness Services

Report to: Public Health and Social Services Committee

Report date: Tuesday, February 19, 2019

Recommendations

That a member of the Public Health and Social Services Committee, **BE APPOINTED** to the Community Advisory Board (CAB) for Homelessness Services for a four year term (2019-2023).

Key Facts

- Under the Community Entity (CE) model of the federal Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS), being replaced with the Reaching Home funding effective April 1, 2019, Niagara Region has acted as the CE and administered federal homelessness funding since 2007.
- The federal government (Service Canada) has provided notification of a funding allocation of \$837,176 per annum for the term April 1, 2019 – March 31, 2021 and \$1,009,568 per annum for the term April 1, 2021 – March 31, 2024 under the new Reaching Home program.
- Service Canada requires the establishment of a CAB to provide direction for the funding, consistent with the previous practice under HPS.
- The CAB is comprised of a cross section of community members, members of the *Home for All Task Force* (Niagara Region's 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Action Plan - HHAP), and a representative from the PHSSC.
- PHSSC is requested to appoint a member of committee to sit on the CAB for this term of Council.
- Housing First remains a priority under the Reaching Home program, with a new requirement to implement a homelessness By-Name list and Coordinated Access.

Financial Considerations

The total federal funding provided is \$837,176 per annum for the two fiscal years 2019 - 2021 and \$1,009,568 per annum for the three fiscal years 2021 - 2024. Previously Niagara Region received \$714,705. Currently there are seven community agencies under contract through HPS funding (ending March 2020) to deliver Housing First, with a total of 156 community based units.

Analysis

Reaching Home, Canada's Homelessness Strategy is a \$2.2 billion investment, designed to support the goals of the National Housing Strategy, more specifically, to support the most vulnerable Canadians to maintain safe, stable and affordable housing, and to reduce chronic homelessness nationally by 50% by 2027-2028.

Under Reaching Home, Community Entities will be required to implement a By-Name List of homeless individuals, along with a Coordinated Access approach to service.

A By-Name List is a real-time list of all people experiencing homelessness in the community, and includes more comprehensive assessments of those with moderate to high acuity or complex needs. It provides for a robust set of data points and information that support coordinated access and prioritization at a household level and an understanding of the movement of service users at a system level. This real-time actionable data supports triage to services, system performance evaluation and needs/gaps analysis (for the identification of additional policies and resources necessary to end homelessness).

Coordinated Access is a process that helps homeless individuals and families access assistance in a coordinated, seamless and standardized way and is a recognized approach that improves homelessness reduction objectives and targeted outcomes. Reaching Home requires that a Coordinated Access system be in place by March 31, 2022.

Reaching Home funding will continue to have an emphasis on Housing First programming, and Niagara has previously leveraged the federal monies to support this best practice successfully addressing the needs of chronic and episodically homeless citizens. Housing First is a recovery-oriented approach to ending homelessness that centres on quickly moving people experiencing homelessness into independent and permanent housing and then providing additional supports and services as needed.

The CAB is responsible for setting direction and providing feedback on the use of Reaching Home funding through the implementation of a local Community Plan and Community Progress Reports.

The CAB is comprised of 12 - 16 members and is representative of the following service areas: basic needs, mental health, youth, Indigenous, funder (Service Canada), Public Health and Social Services Committee, citizens at large, Niagara Region, HHAP working groups (Housing First, Prevention, Service Hubs, No Wrong Door, Housing Affordability Innovation), and Niagara Regional Housing.

The specific purpose of the CAB is to approve Niagara's Homelessness Services Community Plan, to support the planning and implementation of Reaching Home, to provide a forum for networking among and between government and community representatives engaged in issues of homelessness and to create and implement strategies to engage and build strong partnerships that foster inclusion, feedback and the enhancement of community capacity.

Alternatives Reviewed

Not applicable.

Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities

Not applicable.

Other Pertinent Reports

None.

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