
Subject: Emergency Social Services – Canadian Red Cross Contract/Agreement

Report to: Public Health and Social Services Committee

Report date: Tuesday, February 19, 2019

Recommendations

That the Regional Chair and the Regional Clerk **BE AUTHORIZED** to execute an agreement with the Canadian Red Cross (CRC) for the provision of emergency social services for a term of three years, in a form that is satisfactory to the Director of Legal Services.

Key Facts

- Niagara Region is legislated by the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act 2.1 (1), as a municipality, to develop and implement an emergency management program that includes an Emergency Response Plan. The emergency plan shall include procedures to be taken for the safety or evacuation of persons in an emergency area.
- Niagara Region's Community Services Department is responsible for leading the planning and delivery of the Region's emergency social services plan to address how to respond in the event of a community disaster where residents are being displaced from their homes, ensuring agreements are developed and in place in collaboration with local area municipalities and external partners.
- Historically, the Region has held a contract/agreement with the CRC for emergency response disaster relief to support this mandate. Canadian Red Cross has made changes to its delivery model, funding and contract language, and it was determined in partnership with Legal Services, that Council approval would be appropriate.
- The purpose of this report is to seek Council's approval to execute an agreement with the CRC that seeks to build capacity for the provision of emergency social services within the Region and ensures that the desired level of service would be available in the event of an emergency.

Financial Considerations

The annual contribution to the Canadian Red Cross under an agreement with the Region would be \$43,000 for each year of a three-year agreement. This figure is based on the Region's approximate population and is the sum of \$0.10 per capita. This cost will be accommodated within the existing Community Services department operating budget and is similar to what other municipalities contribute for this emergency service.

In the event of an emergency response, services would be determined by the Region in partnership with the local municipality, where it is considered a municipal emergency. The

costs associated with the response are in addition to the annual fee to ensure capacity to respond and the appropriate planning. These additional costs incurred during a response include lodging, food, supplies, out of town volunteer expenses and other direct costs of a Canadian Red Cross response. There is no way to predetermine the size and scope of an emergency, and as such, a range for these costs cannot be provided. Reporting of costs during an emergency would be managed in accordance with the Procurement By-Law Special Circumstances Purchases Section 17 (c) (ii) requiring “the Commissioner of Corporate Services/Treasurer, as soon as possible in the circumstances proceeds with identifying and approving or seeking approval of the funds required to pay for the special Circumstance”, should funds not be available within the Region’s operating budget.

Analysis

Emergency social services involve the coordination of essential services to individuals who are evacuated during an emergency, and are composed of six basic services:

1. Registration and Inquiry: The collection and management of evacuees’ personal information, inquiries regarding evacuees’ safety and family reunification.
2. Emergency Feeding: The provision of meals, snacks, and beverages to evacuees without food or food preparation facilities. This can be provided through a third party arrangement, such as the Salvation Army.
3. Emergency Lodging: The provision of safe and temporary lodging to evacuees, including overnight sleeping arrangements. This may include hotels or group lodging arrangements.
4. Emergency Clothing: The provision of clothing and footwear until regular sources of supply are available.
5. Personal Services: The provision of additional supports to evacuees that are more specialized (e.g. personal and hygiene products, baby supplies, mobility aids, etc.).
6. Management of Reception Centres, where over night accommodation is not required, however information sharing, registration and inquiry, emergency feeding and some personal services may be provided.

Niagara Region’s Community Services Department is responsible for coordinating emergency social services in collaboration with local municipalities and external providers, such as non-profit groups and businesses that provide a specific service to evacuees during an emergency.

Historically, the CRC has been a key partner in the delivery of a range of emergency social services throughout Niagara Region, and has responded to local events such as: White October, St. Catharines apartment fires, Grimsby downtown fire, Port Colborne water system failure.

The CRC has a reputation worldwide for providing emergency social services response during emergencies of all sizes and types. As such, the CRC has staff and volunteers available to respond as requested 24 hours a day, 365 days a year and can mobilize quickly in an emergency situation.

Under the Agreement, the CRC will collaborate and partner with the Region in preparedness activities including participation in emergency exercises, assessments of facilities for evacuation centres, training activities, recruitment of volunteers, pre-positioning of emergency sheltering supplies and the delivery of personal preparedness workshops to community groups upon request.

Municipalities with formalized agreements have priority in terms of receiving emergency response and this is pertinent, particularly for large-scale incidents impacting broader geographic areas. In order to ensure the Niagara Region is equipped to respond to a local emergency, where coordination of essential services to individuals who are evacuated during an emergency is required, it is recommended that the Region enter into a formal agreement with the CRC.

Alternatives Reviewed

No alternates reviewed.

Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities

Not applicable.

Other Pertinent Reports

Not applicable.

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