

Subject: Homelessness Services Negotiated Request for Proposal (NRFP)
Award Results – Prevention Services and Housing First and Home for Good
Supportive Housing Programs

Report to: Public Health and Social Services Committee

Report date: Tuesday, January 9, 2024

Recommendations

1. That the homelessness contracts to Prevention Services successful proponents outlined in Appendix A **BE AWARDED** in the amount of \$5,256,707 for the period April 1, 2024, to March 31, 2027.
2. That an additional contingency for Prevention Services in the amount of \$250,000 **BE APPROVED** should system adjustments be necessary during the term of the contracts.
3. That the homelessness contract to Gateway Residential and Community Support Services for the delivery of Housing First and Home for Good (HF/HFG) Supportive Housing Programs **BE AWARDED** in the amount of \$6,337,693 for the period April 1, 2024, to March 31, 2027
4. That an additional contingency for Housing First and Home for Good in the amount of \$500,000 **BE APPROVED** should system adjustments be necessary during the term of the contracts.
5. That staff **BE AUTHORIZED** to execute any required agreements and documentation related to the agreements for the service providers.

Key Facts

- The purpose of the report is to seek approval to provide \$5,256,707 to Prevention Services and \$6,337,693 to Housing First and Home for Good Supportive Housing Program for the period April 1, 2024, to March 31, 2027, and include additional contingencies should adjustments be necessary during the term of the contracts.
- Council is receiving this report as the award values of the Request for Proposal (RFP) for Prevention and Housing First and Home for Good exceed the \$5M threshold of the Procurement By-law 02-2016 which requires Council approval.

- Successful Prevention programs include diversion, youth programs, trusteeship, supports to prevent eviction and housing loss, and rapid supports to rehouse individuals who have recently lost their housing.
- The Housing First and Home for Good Supportive Housing Program contract was awarded to one proponent; Gateway Residential and Community Support Services of Niagara Inc. in partnership with Southridge Community Church.

Financial Considerations

The total cost, of the three (3) year contract, to provide Prevention Services in Niagara, is \$5,256,707, and \$6,337,693 for Housing First and Home for Good. The funding highlighted within this report is available in the current 2024 approved budget and from confirmed external funding allocations. The three (3) year contracted amount is contingent upon receiving the same funding level until March 31, 2027. The Homelessness Services' base budget is funded primarily by Provincial funding (70%), Federal funding (15%), as well as Regional levy (15%). The provincial funding received from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) is mainly through the Homelessness Prevention Plan (HPP) program.

In 2024, \$2.4 million from the reserve was initially included in the budget detail to fund the RFP pressures for homelessness operations. As the RFP negotiations were on-going, Council approved the flexibility to finalize these contracts by way of approval for up to an additional 1.7M (the total reserve amount now totalling 4.1 M) in one time funding from reserves and, as the asks from proponents were still exceeding funding available some further program reductions were required, in order to ensure that the total budget was achieved with the funding available. A summary of the resulting budget impact will be brought forward in February with the balance of the RFP awards. This is considered a one-time request from the reserve because the HPP funding increase of \$9.3M of which \$6.2M is dedicated in 2024 to capital investments will be repurposed to these contracts in 2025.

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 Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH). Niagara Region also receives federal funding as the local Community Entity for its Reaching Home funding, operating within directives provided by the Office of Infrastructure of Canada

(INFC). In its role, the Homelessness Services division contracts with community agencies to provide prevention services to individuals and families at risk of housing loss.

2023- RFP- 155- Prevention Services

Homelessness Prevention Services work to delay or prevent housing loss, divert individuals to suitable, safe housing placements and work to make any homelessness brief and non-recurring. Successful Prevention Services proponents, outlined in Appendix A, will provide community-based services across Niagara region to individuals at imminent risk of homelessness and/or experiencing hidden homelessness. While engaging them in housing-focused services, proponents aim to support and divert the household from the homeless response system to alternative housing options including but not limited to supports from family or friends. For those who cannot be diverted, Prevention works to shorten the length of time the household experiences homelessness by expediting access to housing.

The NRFP Contract Number 2023- RFP- 155 Prevention Services was issued on August 16, 2023, and closed on Friday, September 29, 2023. At the time of closing, three (3) proposals were received for Trusteeship, Four (4) were received for Rapid Rehousing, four (4) were received for Eviction and Housing Loss Prevention, Seven (7) for Community and Social Integration and One (1) for the Diversion System Lead. The evaluation of all streams was completed by a panel of eight (8) individuals, with representation from Finance and the Community Services department.

2023-RFP- 158-Housing First and Home for Good

Gateway Residential and Community Support Services of Niagara Inc. (outlined in Appendix A) in partnership with Southridge Community Church will provide individuals experiencing chronic and/or episodic homelessness, with mid to high acuity of need, supports and rent subsidies to obtain and retain stable housing within community. Staff 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.

The NRFP, Contract number 2023-RFP-158 for Housing First and Home for Good Supportive Housing was issued at the same time as Prevention Services. Two (2) proposals were received at time of closing. The evaluation was completed by a panel of five (5) individuals, with representation from Finance and the Community Services department.

Negotiated Request for Proposal (NRFP) Process

Successful proponents, outlined in Appendix A, were selected through a NRFP process which had been undertaken with support from the Region's Procurement and Strategic Acquisitions division. A review process was completed in accordance with an evaluation matrix as presented in the Regional Council Memorandum CWCD 2023-129: Subject: Homelessness Services 2024 Procurement Process. Interested service proponents were required to complete a written submission for each service area of interest. After the NRFP closing date, Procurement & Strategic Acquisitions reviewed all submissions to determine compliance. All compliant written submissions were distributed to a review panel for review and scoring.

The selected proponents for each service area were based on the highest score and were invited to enter into contract negotiations with Niagara Region to provide that particular service and participate in the continued transformation for improvement, to a new, more integrated homelessness system.

Alternatives Reviewed

Staff did consider extending current contracts versus entering into a renewed procurement process. The opportunity to engage in a public procurement allowed Homelessness Services to support the continued evolution of the Homelessness Service System, update and streamline contracts, and align with recommendations of recent program reviews i.e., Shelter Capacity Review (COM 21-2023) including providing cost of living increases to contracts to support a healthy workforce within the homelessness service system.

Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities

This procurement 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.

The recommendation will also forward the following Niagara Region's Strategic Priorities

- Effective Region – Transforming service delivery in a way that is innovative, collaborative and fiscally-responsible.
- Equitable Region- Improve access to affordable and attainable housing.

Other Pertinent Reports

- CWCD 2023-129:Subject: Homelessness Services 2024 Procurement Process
- CAO 6-2023 Homelessness Prevention Plan Investment Plan 2023-24

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This report was prepared in consultation with Honey Sarwar, Program Financial Specialist and Amanda Fyfe, Manager, Program Financial Support. Reviewed by Cathy Cousins, Director, Homelessness Services and Community Engagement and Jeff Mulligan, Manager Strategic Sourcing.

Appendices

Appendix A: Summary of Successful Proponents for Prevention Services (2023- RFP-155) and Housing First and Home for Good Supportive Housing Program (2023-RFP-158)

REVISED (due to formatting issues) Appendix A: Summary of Successful Proponents for Prevention Services (2023- RFP-155) and Housing First and Home for Good Supportive Housing Program (2023-RFP-158)

Prevention Area of Service (2023-RFP-155)	Agency	One-time Costs	April 1, 2024 – March 31, 2025	April 1, 2025 – March 31, 2026	April 1, 2026 – March 31, 2027
Trusteeship Services - offers voluntary, short-term services to assist and educate a participant in managing their finances.	Community Care St. Catharines and Thorold*	\$8,625	\$212,315	\$212,315	\$212,315
	Port Colborne Community Association for Resource Extension (Port Cares)	\$3,000	\$105,310	\$105,310	\$105,310
Rapid Rehousing - quickly moves individuals, episodically homeless, into housing and provides services for up to six months to ensure housing stability.	Community Care St. Catharines and Thorold*	\$3,150	\$158,272	\$158,272	\$158,272
Eviction and Housing Loss Prevention - offers services to individuals who are at imminent risk of housing loss or eviction.	Community Care St. Catharines and Thorold*	\$7,000	\$580,718	\$580,718	\$580,718

	Port Colborne Community Association for Resource Extension (Port Cares)	\$2,250	\$82,142	\$82,142	\$82,142
Community Social Integration and Connections- supports youth by maintaining their housing and/or integrating into their community.	Niagara Resource Services for Youth (RAFT) - Youth Reconnect	\$0	\$338,964	\$341,887	\$344,841
	Niagara Resource Services for Youth (RAFT) - Eternal Routes	\$0	\$170,374	\$171,836	\$173,313
Diversion Lead - system wide approach to providing safe and alternative housing options to households before they enter shelter system.	Niagara Resource Services for Youth (RAFT)	\$0	\$90,998	\$91,729	\$92,467
	Total	\$24,025	\$1,739,093	\$1,744,210	\$1,749,378
	Total Award Value for the period of April 1, 2024- March 31, 2027				\$5,256,707

*Community Care St. Catharines and Thorold is the lead agency in a consortium including Community Care West Niagara, Project S.H.A.R.E. Salvation Army Fort Erie and The Hope Center

Housing First and Home for Good Supportive Housing Program (2023-RFP-158)	Agency	One-time Costs	April 1, 2024 – March 31, 2025	April 1, 2025 – March 31, 2026	April 1, 2026 – March 31, 2027
A supportive housing program to assist mid to high acuity individuals to obtain and retain stable housing.	Gateway Residential and Community Support Services of Niagara Inc. in partnership with Southridge Community Church	\$50,792	\$2,061,301	\$2,095,406	\$2,130,193
	Total Award Value for the period of April 1, 2024-March 31, 2027	\$6,337,693			