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June 19, 2019

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

Dear Ms. Norio:

At their June 19, 2019 meeting, the Niagara Regional Housing Board of Directors passed the following motion as recommended in report NRH 8-2019:

1. That the Niagara Regional Housing Board of Directors **RECOMMENDS** to Regional Council the APPROVAL of the Program and Delivery Fiscal Plan (PDFP) for Year 1-3 under the COCHI and OPHI and approve the transfer payment agreement.
2. That the Niagara Regional Housing Board of Directors **DIRECTS** staff to proceed with the determination of the administrative requirements for the delivery of the programs.
3. That the Niagara Regional Housing Board of Directors **REQUEST** Regional Council to direct the Regional Chair to demand that the Provincial government provide additional funding for affordable housing programs in Niagara , reinstating the previous funding levels.
4. That the Niagara Regional Housing Board of Directors **REQUEST** that Regional Council consider providing financial compensation for the Provincial funding shortfall to Niagara Regional Housing.

Your assistance is requested in moving report NRH 8-2019, Canada-Ontario Community Housing (COCHI) & Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative (OPHI) through proper channels to Council for approval.

Sincerely,

Mayor Walter Sendzik
Chair

REPORT TO: Board of Directors of Niagara Regional Housing

**SUBJECT: Canada-Ontario Community Housing (COCHI) & Ontario
Priorities Housing Initiative (OPHI)**

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the Niagara Regional Housing Board of Directors **RECOMMENDS** to Regional Council the APPROVAL of the Program and Delivery Fiscal Plan (PDFP) for Year 1- 3 under the COCHI and OPHI and approve the transfer payment agreement.
2. That the Niagara Regional Housing Board of Directors **DIRECTS** staff to proceed with the determination of the administrative requirements for the delivery of the programs.
3. That the Niagara Regional Housing Board of Directors **REQUEST** Regional Council to direct the Regional Chair to demand that the Provincial government provide additional funding for affordable housing programs in Niagara , reinstating the previous funding levels.
4. That the Niagara Regional Housing Board of Directors **REQUEST** that Regional Council consider providing financial compensation for the Provincial funding shortfall to Niagara Regional Housing.

PURPOSE

This report has been prepared to address the requirements necessary to access the COCHI and OPHI funding as outlined in the Community Housing Renewal Strategy (CHRS) (Appendix A). The PDFP requires approval by the Service Manager and a signature from the Regional Chair and Regional Clerk.

KEY FACTS

- Niagara Regional Housing's allocation under COCHI is \$1,950,183, the allocation under OPHI is \$8,751,300 for a total of **\$10,701,483** over three years, April 2019- March 2022 (Appendix B).
- Niagara Regional Housing's allocation of the COCHI and OPHI for year 1 is \$4,145,379, year two \$2,482,380 and year three \$4,073,724.
- COCHI and OPHI funding for Year 1 (2019) are directed toward capital expenditures specifically.
- The re-confirmed IAH-E allocation for 2019 of \$2,270,400 which is directed to operating expenditures of which spending is already approved in the 2019 budget.

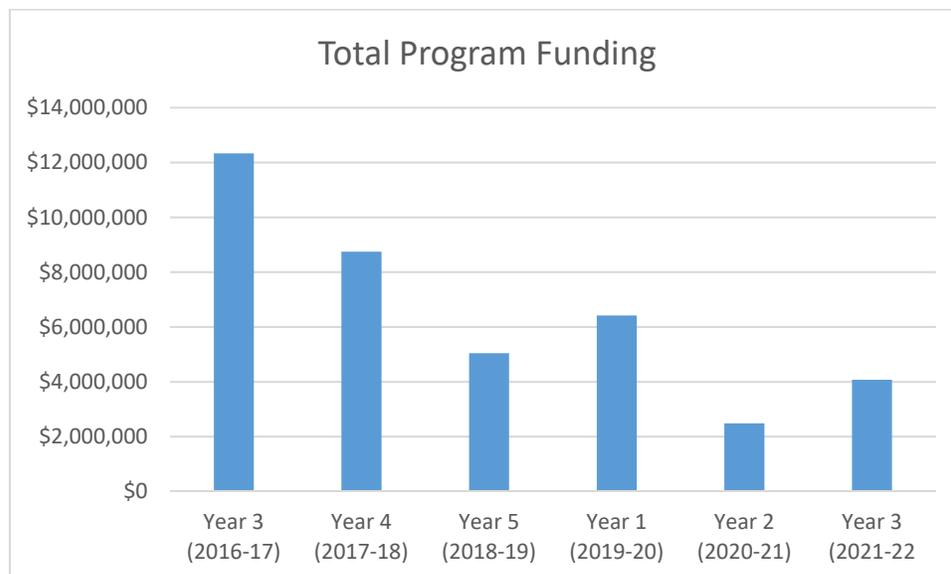
- The COCHI and OPHI Year 1-3 Funding Allocation is to be applied to rent subsidies, support services, capital repair, new development, Niagara Renovates and Welcome Home Niagara. A total of 5% of the funding is allocated to Service Manager administrative costs.
- Due to a decrease in funding, NRH will need to examine budgeting carefully to address shortfalls in specific program areas and contained herein are recommendations as such.

CONSIDERATIONS

Financial

The Province has provided NRH the funding allocation for Niagara, and guidelines for the programs included in the Community Housing Renewal Strategy (CHRS). Of significant concern is the impact of the \$13.15 million (50.3%) reduction in funding for affordable housing programs over the next three years (Appendix C). The 2016 to 2018 allocations under the Investment in Affordable Housing extension (IAH-E) and the Social Infrastructure Funding (SIF) programs totaled \$26,122,100 compared to the 2019 to 2021 allocation of \$12,971,883

This will mean a reduced ability to offer programs that support renovations, accessibility, home ownership and new development. In an effort to address some of these shortfalls, NRH will use the Revolving Loan Funds to support Niagara Renovates and Welcome Home Niagara in the 2020 and 2021 budgets.



Not included in the above chart is a one-time funding in 2016 under the SIF for the Social Housing Improvement Program of \$5,790,000 that was specific for the repair of existing Public Housing and Social Housing Providers. There was also an additional \$289,500 in administration funding associated with that funding.

There will be no impact to the Regional Levy. All funding to be received is Federal and Provincial funding.

Corporate

COCHI and OPHI funding will be used to support the Region's Housing and Homelessness Action Plan (HHAP). More specifically the goals of: "House people who do not have a home" and "Increase opportunities and options across housing continuum".

Governmental Partners

The COCHI and OPHI programs are funded in partnership between the Provincial and Federal governments.

Public and or Service Users

COCHI and OPHI funding will be used directly to support maintaining households currently receiving housing allowances. In addition, this funding will address repairs for both homeowners and non-profits and co-ops, increasing opportunities for low to moderate income households to enter into homeownership and toward the intensification of residential neighborhood currently owned by NRH. All initiatives will be focused on maintaining and growing housing stock in Niagara in order to provide members of the community with safe and affordable housing.

ANALYSIS

One of the key objectives of the COCHI program is to provide funding for an array of housing options that address affordable housing needs across the housing continuum. With the submission of a PDFP, Service Managers demonstrate how they will respond to the housing needs in their community through the allocation of funding over any one or more of the four components under the program:

1. New Supply of Social Housing
2. Repair to Social Housing
3. Rent Supplements
4. Transitional Housing Funding

The key objectives of OPHI include:

1. Rent Supplement/Housing Allowance & Support Services
2. New Supply (rental construction, acquisition, rehabilitation, conversion)
3. Homeownership
4. Ontario Renovates

Although COCHI and OPHI are separate programs they are designed to share common elements and are “stackable” or may be used in combination with one another to fund programs. Guidelines specify that all dollars delivered under these funding streams are given on a “use it, or lose it” basis which means that 100% of all dollars allocated in a year must be spent within that year or it will be reallocated to other providers in need. 90% of all allocations must be committed by December 31st with the remaining 10% spent no later than March 31st of the following year.

Allocations for the April 2019-March 2022 Period

Homeownership – Welcome Home Niagara

The Home Ownership component aims to assist low to moderate income renter households to purchase affordable homes by providing down payment assistance in the form of a forgivable loan.

Specific objectives are:

- To provide renter households with an opportunity to move into homeownership
- To ease the demand for rental housing by assisting renter households to purchase affordable homes
- To encourage non-profit affordable homeownership developers to build affordable homeownership units

Under this program, total funding advanced to each homeowner is capped at 5% of the purchase price of the home. NRH has allocated \$200,000 of the 2019 OPHI funding for this program.

The 2019 call for Welcome Home Niagara applications yielded over 30 applications, however the funding allotted to the this program for 2019 will support the purchase of only 4- 6 homes. In an effort to provide a greater number of down payments, \$100,000 was moved from the revolving loan fund into the 2019 Welcome Home Niagara budget (NRH 19-180-2.7). NRH prioritized this additional funding for applicants currently living in social housing which moves them along the housing continuum from renting to owning their own home. This will help free up valuable social housing units.

In 2020 WHN will have a budget of \$100,000 and in 2021, an allocation of \$280,000. With an evaluation of need and considering application volume, NRH may elect to provide additional dollars to this program through the Revolving Loan Program in each of the coming two years’ operating budget.

Applications are currently being approved for WHN, working within the budget set forth by the province under IAH-E of \$180,000, plus the \$100,000 contribution from the revolving loan fund. Due to the low number of approvals budgeted for this year the program will maintain a waitlist for future approvals.

Niagara Renovates

The Niagara Renovates component provides financial assistance in the form of a forgivable loan to renovate and/or rehabilitate affordable ownership and rental properties.

The objectives are:

- To improve the living conditions of households in need through financial assistance to repair deficiencies
- To foster independent living of seniors and persons with disabilities by providing financial assistance to support modifications and renovations to increase accessibility of affordable rental and ownership properties
- To increase the supply of affordable rental housing by providing assistance to create secondary suites in existing single family homes.

The sub components are

- 1) To assist low to moderate income homeowner households to repair their home to bring it to acceptable standards while improving the energy efficiency of the unit and to increase accessibility of the unit.
- 2) To provide multi-residential landlords of affordable rental units essential repairs or to modify units for accessibility, and to rehabilitate and improve existing homeless shelters.

In 2019/20 the Niagara Renovates budget will be a combination of already committed dollars from the IAH-E funding as well an allocation from OPHI for a total of \$376,370. Funding under this program will be prioritized for repairs for non-profits and co-ops as well as working with the Niagara Region to provide repairs to improve local homeless shelters.

The maximum funding for a single applicant is \$22,000 for home-owners, \$25,000 for secondary suites and a maximum of \$90,000 for multi-unit rehabilitation (funding is prorated based on a per-unit and per building max).

Allocations for Niagara Renovates in the 2020-22 (2020- \$519,321, 2021- \$600,00) years are increased year over year (to start to bring the service levels back to what they are in the 2019 with an aim to help as many people in Niagara as possible to remain safe in their own homes). The greater number of households that are able to remain in their current living situation, the less impact on the rental market, in particular the NRH waitlists which are realizing unprecedented numbers.

Repairs

The 2019/20 budget has allocated \$361,740 under COCHI for building repair, which must support the repair of both Niagara Regional Housing owned units as well as those identified for housing providers. Priority will be given to fund emergency repairs as well as projects that were previously cancelled under the cap and trade funding in 2018. To further determine spending priorities, the recently completed building condition assessments (BCA), performed on the owned and non-profit & co-op buildings in Niagara, will be consulted.

Rental Assistance

The objective of the rental assistance component is to address affordability issues of households across Niagara and is delivered in the form of Housing allowances.

The 2019 budget for rental assistance programs is a part of the final year of funding through the IAH-E funding. Rental assistance through this program currently has a budget of \$1,150,000 and will require a large commitment to maintain current service levels.

In 2020 the allocation of \$1,056,960. will be directed toward maintaining rents that have been funded to date under various iterations of the IAH-E program. In order to maintain current service levels through March 2022, \$1,152,060. must be budgeted in Year 3 of the program.

In an effort to maximize the dollars and preserve the current tenancies supported by the IAH-E funding, staff will be working diligently to convert any eligible households to an RGI (Rent Geared to Income) subsidy or support the transition to the new Canada-Ontario Rent Benefit Program. The transitions of these households will require careful planning as the amounts that tenants are eligible for will vary from their current subsidy. The new program will provide only \$2,500 annually to recipients while current IAH-E program recipients are eligible for up to a maximum of \$4,200 annually. Preservation of existing agreements is imperative to ensure housing remains stable for those receiving funds under these programs. Take up of additional households in these programs will be very difficult with the limited funds.

Support Services

New to the OPHI funding is the expansion to include Support Services to existing Housing Providers under Social Housing Agreements and rental units using OPHI funding. The current 2019 operating budget for NRH included a pilot for an additional Community Programs Coordinator (CPC). To sustain this program and increase by one more FTE the \$350,554 is budgeted for 2020 & 2021(2020-\$150,000 and 2021-\$200,554). These additional FTE will be dedicated to improving

CPC services to NRH as well as an expansion to provide this service to the non-profit and co-op housing providers and the rent supplement landlords. The investment in this position is intended to reduce evictions, preserve provider and landlord relationships and create solutions for hard to serve tenants.

Rental Housing Component - New Development

The Rental Housing component will:

1. Increase the supply of Community Rental Housing for households on, or eligible to be on, social housing waitlists
2. Ensure that safe adequate and affordable rental housing is available to Niagara households

Niagara Regional Housing is currently the owner of residential property in Niagara Falls. Preliminary investigation suggested that intensification of this area will maximize the site and number of units. The intensification project is included in the 2019 Capital Budget pending additional funding sources. This capital project will see the demolition of the current single unit homes to create space for two new multi-unit buildings.

The discussions around this intensification are in collaboration with the Niagara Region and City of Niagara Falls Planning Department. The project is projecting two separate sites with a18 units on one, and approximately 60 on the other.

The proposed allocation of \$3,000,000 for 2019 of OPHI funding will be directed toward construction costs in conjunction with some capital reserves and DC revenues. Do to the lack of available funds some debt may be required to complete this project.

Urban Native

The COCHI funding guidelines specify allocations to Urban Native Housing. In Niagara two providers are currently under agreement with NRH and will be receiving dollars for repairs and development under the repair budget line.

Administration

COCHI/OPHI funding allows for a maximum of 5% of total funding to be used for administration costs to deliver the programs. In 2019 this is equal to \$207,269. The 5% allocations for 2020 and 2021 are \$124,119 and \$203,686 respectively. This is a significant decline in funding for staffing in comparison to the past 3 years.

Economies will need to be examined with the view to ensure that all staff duties can remain addressed. Senior staff will be reviewing current staffing levels and aims to keep all current positions whole but ultimately adjustments to the current FTE may need to be made.

ALTERNATIVES REVIEWED
N/A

ORIGIN OF REPORT

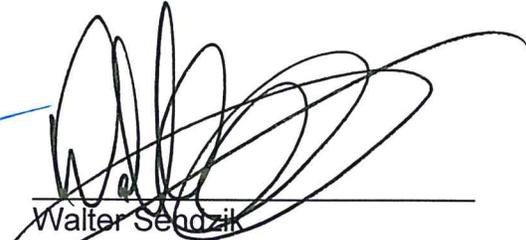
This report has been brought forward by staff

Submitted by:

Approved by:



Donna Woiceshyn
Chief Executive Officer



Walter Senczik
Chair

This report was prepared by Jenny Shickluna Manager Housing Programs consultation with Stephanie Muhic, Program Financial Specialist and Donna Woiceshyn, CEO.

**Ministry of
Municipal Affairs
and Housing**

Office of the Minister

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**Ministère des
Affaires municipales
et du Logement**

Bureau du ministre

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April 17, 2019

Mr. Jim Bradley
Regional Chair
Regional Municipality of Niagara
1815 Sir Isaac Brock Way
PO Box 1042
Thorold ON L2V 4T7

Dear Regional Chair Bradley:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jim".

Our government for the people understands the importance of housing that is affordable, adequate and accessible, and that meets the needs of Ontario's diverse communities and populations. Despite the significant budget challenges our government faces, I am pleased that we will support critical continued housing investments and leverage federal funding under the National Housing Strategy through new provincial investments. I am writing to you today to outline funding for housing and homelessness programs as confirmed through the 2019 Ontario Budget.

My Ministry will be providing over \$1 billion in transfer payments for housing and homelessness programs in 2019-20, inclusive of federal transfers. As we work to address the province's fiscal circumstances, total transfers will decrease slightly in 2020-21 to just under \$1 billion and will return in 2021-22 to just over \$1 billion, subject to future multi-year budget decisions. This funding envelope enables us to maintain commitments to existing programs and use a flexible approach to cost-match funds for the National Housing Strategy over a multi-year period. The vast majority of these transfer payment programs flow through Service Managers.

This letter provides further program-by-program information and your specific allocations are detailed in an attachment.

Ongoing Programs

The **Investment in Affordable Housing for Ontario (2014 Extension)** program has successfully helped communities to build affordable rental housing, make home ownership attainable for lower-income Ontarians and offer funding for much-needed repairs. Federal funding under this program concluded in 2018-19. Our government is committing \$80.1 million in 2019-20 to complete the cost-matching requirements under this program. I am pleased to confirm your funding allocation for this final year of program funding, consistent with the previously communicated planning allocation.

To support communities across Ontario in their efforts to prevent and address homelessness, the **Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI)** provides a flexible, outcomes-based, and accountable approach to funding. Despite the significant fiscal challenges this government faces, I am pleased we are able to maintain this critical funding in 2019-20 at the 2018-19 level of \$323.7 million and to increase funding to a new base of \$338.7 million beginning in 2020-21.

Our government recognizes how critical supportive housing investments are to address homelessness and maintain housing stability for some of our most vulnerable people. I am also pleased to advise that province-wide operating investments in the **Home for Good** program and **Indigenous Supportive Housing Program** will be maintained at the current level of \$63 million for each of the next two years (2019-20 and 2020-21). Existing capital commitments will also be maintained.

It is our government's intention to increase the ongoing level of provincial operating funding for the Home for Good and Indigenous Supportive Housing Programs to \$94.7 million in 2021-22. Decisions regarding allocation of the increased funding will be determined at a later date.

It is critical that the investment our government has allocated to supportive housing is fully used to support as many households as possible to find the housing and supports they need. I was disappointed to learn that you were unable to fully allocate your 2018-19 Home for Good operating allocation.

I am committed to providing Home for Good funding to you in 2019-20 and beyond at a level that enables you to continue to support households currently housed through this program and any new households who may be housed in

buildings that may be coming on stream through currently committed Home for Good capital investments.

In order to confirm your appropriate funding allocation for 2019-20 and beyond, I am asking that you renew your Home for Good Take-Up Plan to demonstrate your funding plans and capacity to deliver. This plan is requested by May 31. Your 2019-20 allocation will be confirmed following receipt and review of this plan.

New Programs

Today I announced our government's Community Housing Renewal Strategy – a multi-year plan to sustain and grow our community housing system. Two new programs are being launched in 2019-20 to support this Strategy, leveraging federal investments under the bilateral agreement between the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing and Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation.

The **Canada-Ontario Community Housing Initiative (COCHI)** will provide funding to replace the federal Social Housing Agreement funding that expires each year, beginning 2019-20. Total federal funding under this program is \$33.2 million in the current year, \$81.0 million in 2020-21 and \$112.1 million in 2021-22.

The federal government has acknowledged that their funding for social housing has declined over time and through their funding of the Canada-Ontario Community Housing Initiative federal social housing investments will be maintained at about the 2018-19 levels. Over the period that federal expenditures have been declining, municipal expenditures on social housing have been growing. As allowed under the bilateral agreement, current municipal spending on social housing will be used to count as the cost-matching required under this program.

This funding can be used to repair, regenerate and expand community housing and to protect affordability support for tenants. It can be used to support community housing providers whose original program arrangements are expiring and help them to become more sustainable. Service Managers will be given significant flexibility to determine priorities locally, in consultation with their housing providers. In addition, consistent with the bilateral agreement, Service Managers will be required to give priority to Indigenous providers under the

Urban Native Housing program who have expiring operating agreements, where these exist.

Your allocation amounts are equivalent to the amount of funding you are losing under the Social Housing Agreement each year.

Note that in addition to allocations to Service Managers, Canada-Ontario Community Housing Initiative funding is also being made available to support other housing providers who have received legacy Social Housing Agreement funding through provincial ministries, such as supportive housing providers.

The **Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative** will also launch in 2019-20, providing flexible funding to all 47 Service Managers and the two Indigenous Program Administrators to address local priorities in the areas of housing supply and affordability, including new affordable rental construction, community housing repair, rental assistance, tenant supports and affordable homeownership. The design of this program will build on our joint success in the delivery of the Investment in Affordable Housing Program.

Our government is committed to fully cost-match this program. Total federal and provincial funding of \$123.3 million in 2019-20, \$65 million in 2020-21 and \$99.9 million in 2021-22 will be available to allocate under the program. Provincial spending of \$34.7 million from existing programs across 2018-19 and 2019-20 will be counted towards the cost-matching requirement.

Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit

The province plans to begin negotiations with the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation shortly to finalize the program design and amend the bilateral agreement for the **Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit**. This will allow housing benefits to begin flowing to Ontario households beginning April 2020, when federal funding becomes available.

In the meantime, the province will continue to provide portable housing benefits to **Survivors of Domestic Violence and Human Trafficking** who are eligible under the Special Priority Policy and who choose to take a portable housing benefit as an alternative to waiting for a rent-geared-to-income unit to become available. This critical program is available province-wide and provides benefits that are portable across the province, enabling recipients to make the housing

choices that are best for them. \$10 million is available for this program in 2019-20.

Once the Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit becomes available, we plan to continue to support these households – as well as others – through the new benefit program.

Next Steps

Additional details concerning these initiatives, including Program Guidelines and a draft Transfer Payment Agreement for new programs, will be shared with your staff in the coming days.

I am pleased that our government for the people is able to continue to support the important work that you do to improve housing outcomes in your community, while we also work to improve Ontario's overall fiscal situation. I look forward to continuing our work together.

Yours truly,



The Honourable Steve Clark
Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing

- c. Mr. Ron Trip, Chief Administrative Officer, Regional Municipality of Niagara
Ms. Donna Woiceshyn, Chief Executive Officer, Regional Municipality of Niagara

APPENDIX – FUNDING ALLOCATIONS

Regional Municipality of Niagara

Program	2019-20 Confirmed Allocation	2020-21 Planning Allocation	2021-22 Planning Allocation
Investment in Affordable Housing for Ontario (2014 Extension)	\$2,270,400	N/A	N/A
Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative	\$7,536,433	\$7,847,786	\$7,847,786
Home for Good – Operating	TBC	TBC	TBC
Canada-Ontario Community Housing Initiative	\$380,779	\$531,980	\$1,037,424
Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative	\$3,764,600	\$1,950,400	\$3,036,300

Appendix B

Breakdown of the COCHI/OPHI PDFP

Community Housing Renewal Strategy	2019-2020 Confirmed Allocation	2020-2021 Confirmed Allocation	2021-2022 Confirmed Allocation	Total per Allocation	
Funding Program					
*Canada-Ontario Community Housing Initiative (COCHI)	380,779	531,980	1,037,424	1,950,183	
*Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative (OPHI)	3,764,600	1,950,400	3,036,300	8,751,300	
Total Allocation for Community Housing	4,145,379	2,482,380	4,073,724	10,701,483	
Program Delivery					
Operating Expenditures					
Rental Supplements		800,000	800,000	1,600,000	OPHI
Housing Allowances		256,960	352,060	609,020	OPHI
Support Services*		150,000	200,554	350,554	OPHI
Total Operating Expenditures	-	1,206,960	1,352,614	2,559,574	
Capital Expenditures					
Repair	361,740	531,980	1,037,424		COCHI
New Development	3,000,000	-	600,000		OPHI
Niagara Renovates	-	519,321	600,000		OPHI
Repair - Providers and Shelters	376,370				OPHI
Homeownership	200,000	100,000	280,000		OPHI
Total Capital Expenditures	3,938,110	1,151,301	2,517,424	7,606,835	
Administration	207,269	124,119	203,686	535,074	COCHI/OPHI
Total Expenditures	4,145,379	2,482,380	4,073,724	10,701,483	

Appendix C

Funding Allocation Past 3 years vs. Current 3 Years

	SIF/IAH-E 3 yr total = \$26,122,100			COCHI/OPHI 3 yr total= \$12,971,883			
Program Funding	Year 3 (2016-17)	Year 4 (2017-18)	Year 5 (2018-19)	Year 1 (2019-20)	Year 2 (2020-21)	Year 3 (2021-22)	Total
RS/HA (including Housing First)	2,543,232	3,980,734	1,119,000	1,074,000	1,056,960	1,152,060	10,925,986
Support Services (New in CHRS)					150,000	200,554	350,554
New Development	8,193,817	2,888,000	2,031,524	3,000,000	-	600,000	16,713,341
Repair Program				738,110	531,980	1,037,424	2,307,514
Niagara Renovates	770,000	1,000,000	1,126,300	911,015	519,321	600,000	4,926,636
Welcome Home Niagara	280,000	478,000	380,000	380,000	100,000	280,000	1,898,000
Administration Funding	546,551	398,366	386,576	312,654	124,119	203,686	1,971,952
Total Annual Allocation	12,333,600	8,745,100	5,043,400	6,415,779	2,482,380	4,073,724	39,093,983
(2016-2018) Funding \$26,122,100				(2019-2021)Funding \$12,971,883			

*does not include \$5,790,000 million SHIP (Social Housing Improvement Program, 2016 one time capital repair funding for providers)