
Subject: Emergency Shelter Negotiated Request for Proposal (NRFP) Award Results

Report to: Public Health and Social Services Committee

Report date: Tuesday, March 10, 2020

Recommendations

1. That the homelessness contracts for emergency shelter services **BE AWARDED** in the amount of \$11,705,184 for the period April 1, 2020 to March 31, 2023 to the following nine (9) service providers:

1.	Boys and Girls Club of Niagara	\$ 403,200
2.	Casa El Norte Refugee Assistance Program	\$ 403,200
3.	The Hope Centre	\$ 1,116,000
4.	Matthew House Refugee Ministry of Fort Erie	\$ 403,200
5.	The RAFT (Niagara Resource Service for Youth)	\$ 583,434
6.	The Salvation Army Booth Centre	\$ 1,050,000
7.	Southridge Community Church	\$ 2,577,000
8.	Start Me Up Niagara	\$ 966,750
9.	The Young Women's Christian Association of Niagara Region (YWCA Niagara Region)	\$ 4,202,400
TOTAL		11,705,184

2. That an additional contingency of \$250,000 **BE APPROVED** should system adjustments be necessary during the term of the contracts to increase the number or adjust the type of beds offered.
3. That staff **BE AUTHORIZED** to execute any required amendments and documentation related to the agreements for service providers of emergency shelter to implement funding adjustments.

Key Facts

- The purpose of the report is to seek approval to provide \$11,705,184 to the emergency shelter system for the period April 1, 2020 to March 31, 2023 (36 months).

- The requested funding includes an additional contingency of \$250,000 should funding adjustments be necessary during the term of the contracts to increase the number or adjust types of beds offered.
- Emergency shelter services include overnight accommodation, meals, hygiene items, and other supports including assisting clients to find stable and adequate housing.
- This award will provide two (2) additional apartment units for families in the shelter system over the prior contract period. Council is receiving this report as the award value of the Request for Proposal (RFP) is over the \$5 M threshold of the Procurement By-law 02-2016 which requires Council approval.

Financial Considerations

The total cost, of the three (3) year contract, to provide emergency shelter in Niagara is \$11,705,184 or \$3,901,728 annually. The funding highlighted within this report is based on the current 2020 approved budget and confirmed external funding allocations. The three (3) year contracted amount of \$11,705,184 is contingent upon receiving the same funding level until March 31, 2023. Homelessness Services are funded primarily by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) (70%), Federal Reaching Home funding (8%), as well as Regional levy (22%). The funding received from the MMAH is mainly through the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI) program. The funding is used not only to support the shelter system but also to fund the continuum of critical homelessness services (prevention, outreach, and housing with supports/Housing First). Confirmed CHPI funding for 2020-21 fiscal year is \$7,847,786.

This award is within the 2020 approved budget for Homelessness Services, which included a 20% increase to the shelter funding allocation, over 2019. This increase was required to support providers of emergency shelter as they continue to experience pressures associated with higher occupancy rates (resulting in additional direct costs eg. meals, laundry, cleaning), addressing the needs of clients presenting with higher acuity (substance abuse, mental health and trauma) and providing cost of living increases to agencies from the previous 2017 contracts.

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 MMAH.

The Homelessness Services division contracts with community agencies to provide emergency shelter services to individuals and families who are homeless. These agencies provide overnight accommodation, food and personal basic needs, along with services to find appropriate housing for the client. In addition, shelters provide connections and referrals to other services including mental health supports and treatment, addictions treatment and healthcare counseling as required.

The Homelessness Services team is dedicated to ensuring that Niagara's homelessness system aligns with best practice and reflects local needs, and therefore set a goal to maintain existing shelter capacity. This aligns with provincial funding expectations i.e. to operate from a Housing First and people centered approach which focuses on the shift from reliance on emergency shelter solutions to preventative and rapid rehousing services. In addition, there is a commitment to support agencies to transition shelter service orientation to a housing-focused shelter approach. Housing-focused sheltering diverts individuals seeking shelter to safe and appropriate options wherever possible (De Jong, 2019). If an individual does enter a shelter there is an expectation that they will be working on obtaining permanent housing during their stay (De Jong, 2019)¹.

These practices were also referenced in the January 2019 Homelessness Service System Review report by Whitesell & Company. Ten recommendations were proposed by Whitesell & Company to support the evolution to a more streamlined, efficient and effective homelessness services system that is proposed to better enable clients to obtain affordable, safe and appropriate housing that meets their needs.

A Negotiated Request for Proposal (NRFP) process has been undertaken through the Region's Procurement division and a review process completed in accordance with the Council approved Evaluation Matrix from COM 29-2019. The NRFP, Contract number 2019-RFP-299 for emergency shelter services was issued on October 22, 2019 and closed on November 19, 2019. Eleven (11) proposals were received at time of closing. The evaluation was completed by a panel of six (6) individuals, with representation from another service system manager, and Niagara Region's Public Health, Finance and Community Services departments.

The resulting financial awards take into consideration agency requests and a movement toward standardization of funding for comparable offerings, while working within the

¹ [Housing Focused Sheltering November 21 2017.pdf](#)

funding envelope available for this service. Throughout the 2017-2020 contract period an additional 45 beds were added to the system and are included in this award. In addition, a further two (2) apartment units have been added in this award. The two (2) new apartment units for families are more economical than hotel rooms which are utilized to support system pressures when additional capacity is required. It is anticipated that system transformation, with an emphasis on the best practices of diversion and housing-focused shelter provision, along with increased spaces in supportive housing, will allow the existing shelter providers to meet the community needs for emergency shelter.

The total request for funding from the successful agencies was \$16,332,867. Niagara Region has negotiated with all nine (9) agencies to ensure standardized levels of service, training opportunities for staff and to be able to award agencies within the 2020 approved budget. Through successful negotiations the award was reduced by \$4,627,683, and local agencies have once more committed to address unfunded costs through fundraising efforts.

Alternatives Reviewed

Not applicable. Process approved by Council via COM 29-2019.

Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities

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.

Healthy and Vibrant Community – Objective 2.3 – Addressing Affordable Housing Needs

Other Pertinent Reports

- COM 29-2019 Procurement of Homelessness Services for Period of April 1, 2020-March 31, 2023
- COM 23-2019 Niagara Region Application for Built for Zero Canada
- COM 10-2019 Homelessness Services System Review
- COM 1-2020 Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative Investment Plan 2020-21

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Works Cited

De Jong, I. (2019, December 4). *The Book on Ending Homelessness*. Victoria, BC: FriesenPress.