



**STAFF REPORT
ACTION REQUIRED**

**2009 Federal Homelessness Funding: Update #2 on
Negotiation of a New Federal Agreement and Transition
to the New Program**

Date:	December 17, 2008
To:	Community Development and Recreation Committee
From:	General Manager, Shelter, Support and Housing Administration
Wards:	All
Reference Number:	

SUMMARY

A staff report approved by Council at its meeting of December 1, 2 and 3, 2008 granted the General Manager, Shelter, Support and Housing Administration, authority to negotiate a contribution agreement under a renewed Homelessness Partnering Strategy or any other new federal homelessness funding program. It also provided for transitional funding arrangements if a new federal agreement is not executed in time to avoid interruption of community agency funding.

In approving the report, Council “requested the General Manager, Shelter, Support and Housing Administration to provide monthly actionable reports to the Community Development and Recreation Committee on the status of the Program.”

RECOMMENDATIONS

The General Manager, Shelter, Support and Housing Administration, recommends that:

1. the General Manager, Shelter, Support and Housing Administration, be authorized to report directly to the next meeting of Council if new information concerning 2009 federal homelessness funding becomes available.

Implementation Points

The current Homelessness Partnering Strategy ends March 31, 2009. Service-related funding agreements between the City of Toronto and community-based homelessness agencies will also expire on that date. If funding is not extended or there is significant

delay in renewing such funding, community agencies may need to wind down their service projects and lay off experienced staff. In addition, there may not be sufficient funds for City staff to provide direct services, such as pre-employment supports for homeless individuals, and to also administer the HPI program.

Recommendations in the report approved by Council at its meeting of December 1, 2 and 3, 2008 make it possible for the General Manager, Shelter, Support and Housing Administration, to move quickly to get a contribution agreement in place by April 1, 2009 and begin the investment of homelessness funding, so as to ensure no disruption of critical services.

Financial Impact

There is no financial impact as a result of approval of this report.

DECISION HISTORY

The report approved by Council at its meeting of December 1, 2 and 3, 2008 was necessary because the current two-year Homelessness Partnering Strategy is scheduled to end on March 31, 2009. The report, dated October 16, 2008, was approved by the Budget Committee at its meeting of October 24, 2008 and by the Executive Committee at its meeting on November 10, 2008. The report, entitled “2009 Federal Homelessness Funding: Authority to Negotiate a New Federal Agreement and Manage the Transition to the New Program”, can be accessed at <http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2008/cd/bgrd/backgroundfile-16085.pdf>.

All final decisions concerning the future funding of homelessness services will depend upon the decisions of the new federal government.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

The Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS)

In December 2006 the federal government announced the creation of the Homelessness Partnering Strategy, a new two-year homelessness funding program replacing the Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative (SCPI), which had been in existence since 2000.

On December 20, 2007, a contribution agreement was executed with Human Resources and Skills Development Canada for a total allocation of \$34,592,778 for the period April 1, 2007 to March 31, 2009.

Under the HPS, a wide range of community-based service programs and capital projects have been funded, as outlined in the October 16 report from the General Manager, Shelter, Support and Housing Administration.

HPS-funded community service programs end on March 31, 2009. An early commitment from the new federal government to renewal of funding for homelessness programming is urgently required.

COMMENTS

On October 30, 2008 Diane Finley was appointed as the new Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development (HRSD), responsible for federal homelessness programming.

The HRSD website states that “On September 4, 2008 the Government of Canada decided to set aside funding for housing and homelessness programs at \$387.9 million per year for five years to March 31, 2014.”

The Throne Speech, which opened the (now prorogued) fortieth session of Parliament on November 18, 2008, included the following statement: “Our Government will extend the Homelessness Partnering Strategy and help more Canadians find affordable housing.”

The above notwithstanding, there has been no further information as to when and how the HPS funding will be renewed or that other federal homelessness funding will be implemented. It is, therefore, recommended that the General Manager, Shelter, Support and Housing Administration, report directly to the next meeting of Council if new information becomes available.

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SIGNATURE

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