

## **City of Toronto Homeless Initiatives Fund**

*(City Council on December 14, 15 and 16, 1999, adopted this Clause, without amendment.)*

**The Community Services Committee recommends the adoption of the following report (November 30, 1999) from the Commissioner of Community and Neighbourhood Services:**

### Purpose:

This report recommends that the City enter into a Partnership Agreement with the United Way of Greater Toronto, Human Resources Development Canada, and the Ministry of Community and Social Services for the purpose of delivering the Toronto Homeless Community Economic Development Program. The Program will provide funding to support employment focused activities with people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

Funding is recommended in the amount of \$250,000.00 to the United Way of Greater Toronto, the program administrator for the Toronto Homeless Community Economic Development Program.

### Financial Implications and Impact Statement:

Funds for the initiative are available in the 1999/2000 City of Toronto Homeless Initiatives Fund (CT-HIF). The CT-HIF includes a 1999/2000 allocation of \$4.724 million to the City of Toronto from the Province as well as an allocation of \$881,100.00 from the City in the 1999 approved budget for the Consolidated Grants Program.

### Recommendations:

It is recommended that:

- (1) Council authorize the Commissioner of Community and Neighbourhood Services to enter into a Partnership Agreement with the United Way of Greater Toronto, Human Resources Development Canada, and the Ministry of Community and Social Services for the purpose of developing the Toronto Homeless Community Economic Development Program;
- (2) Council approve a \$250,000.00 grant from the City of Toronto Homeless Initiatives Fund to the United Way of Greater Toronto who will serve as the Program Administrator on behalf of the funders and provide funding and supports to Community Economic Development activities directed at the homeless and at risk of homelessness in Toronto; and
- (3) the appropriate City officials be authorized and directed to take the necessary action to give effect thereto.

### Background:

In November 1998 representatives of the City, Provincial and Federal governments, and community agencies that work with homeless people, began meetings to discuss responses to homelessness in Toronto through joint funding initiatives. As a result of these meetings the Toronto Community Economic Development/Homeless Strategic Directions Group was established. The mission of the group was to “develop and facilitate the implementation of immediate, mid-term and long-term comprehensive community economic development strategies for Toronto with a focus on preventing and/or reducing the incidence of homelessness and marginalization of individuals.” The City has a history of funding a variety of Community Economic Development (CED) projects targeted towards homeless people and saw the benefits of collaborating with other funders to co-ordinate funding and supports to the sector.

The Toronto Homeless Community Economic Development Program, the result of these meetings, is a unique collaboration between three levels of government (federal, provincial, and municipal) and non-government funders (the United Way of Greater Toronto).

The goal of this program is to fund CED projects where non-profit organizations, working with homeless people or those at risk of homelessness, develop employment focused initiatives such as small businesses or self-employment initiatives. The program will also provide business advisory support, such as marketing and business planning, to funded projects. This will help groups improve their capacity to implement these projects. An independent evaluator will also be hired to measure the effectiveness of the program in meeting its goals.

#### Comments:

The Report of the Mayor’s Homelessness Action Task Force recognized the importance of alternative approaches to job creation through the support of Community Economic Development (CED) projects. CED refers to initiatives by community-based groups to create employment focused activities for low income and marginalized people such as self employment initiatives and small businesses. The Task Force recommended that the City invest in CED over the next three years as a strategy to alleviate homelessness.

By joining with the United Way of Greater Toronto, Human Resources Development Canada, and the Ministry of Community and Social Services in the Toronto Homeless CED Program, the City’s contribution of \$250,000.00 will lever an additional \$850,000.00 in funding for a total of \$1.1 million in funding for projects in 2000. This is a three-year program, and based on successful program evaluation, Council authority will be sought for similar grants in 2001, and 2002 to be drawn from the CT-HIF.

This joint funding initiative is unique in that it will:

- co-ordinate the work of four different funders and provide “one stop shopping” for community groups;
- provide comprehensive business supports to the community groups involved in the program in order to strengthen the capacity of the sector; and

- integrate an evaluation component into the program from the outset in order to measure the impact of the projects on their participants.

The United Way of Greater Toronto has been chosen as the Program Co-ordinator. The United Way will administer the program on behalf of HRDC, MCSS and the City. The four funders will make all major program decisions jointly by consensus. The Program Co-ordinator will receive funding from its three partners and manage all finances, issue Request for Proposals for projects, organize the project selection process, create and manage a monitoring reporting and evaluation system, and provide supports to projects.

### Conclusions:

The Toronto Homeless CED Program is one of a series of new initiatives to be funded through the City of Toronto Homeless Initiatives Fund. It is unique in that it is a collaboration with the Federal and Provincial governments and the United Way of Greater Toronto.

Funding for the CT-HIF comes from two sources. The City received a 1998/99 allocation from the Province of \$1.02 million and an allocation of \$4.724 million in 1999/2000. In addition, the City approved an allocation of \$881,100.00 in the approved budget for the Consolidated Grants Program. Staff has reported to Committee on the process used to determine priorities, select projects for funding, and to measure the “outcomes” of project activities.

Projects were selected through three Proposal Calls, one issued in December 1998, the second in July 1999, and the third in November 1999. The first 25 projects selected have almost completed their first year of operations and staff will be reporting on project outcomes and making recommendations for continued funding of successful projects to the Committee at its January meeting. The second round of projects was approved by City Council at its meeting in September 1999. Fifty-one projects have just begun operation. An interim report on these projects will be submitted to the Committee in March 1999. The third round of projects will be selected by mid-December. Council authorized the Commissioner to allocate funds to these projects and a report on the projects selected will be submitted to Committee in January 2000.

Once the third round of projects has been approved for funding, the CT-HIF budget of \$5,605,100.00 for 1999/2000 will have been fully allocated. Funds have been set aside for appeals and for immediate responses to winter emergencies. A report outlining the full use of the funds for the 1999/2000 CT-HIF will be submitted to Committee in early 2000.

Staff are also in the process of developing a more comprehensive Reporting and Evaluation system for the CT-HIF that will be able to provide quantitative and qualitative information on project activities, identify gaps in service and enable staff to more effectively measure service outcomes. Staff will be reporting to Committee on this system early in 2000.

1999 has been a busy year for the CT-HIF. The Fund has been used to provide a broad range of new supports to community-based groups to address the problem of homelessness across the City. In 2000, the focus will shift from building the program to evaluating project outcomes,

co-ordinating project activities, and system planning. In addition to reports on the CT-HIF program as a whole, staff will be reporting on various key issues such as outreach services to homeless people.

Participation in the Toronto Homeless Community Economic Development Program will not only provide a variety of employment focused supports to projects working with homeless people and those at risk of homelessness, but may also lead to further jointly funded programs. By working in partnership with other levels of government as well as other funders, the City can leverage its funding to community groups as well as provide more comprehensive supports to funded projects.

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