



STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

City Supports to Shelter Service Providers for Successful Service Delivery

Date:	September 29, 2015
To:	Community Development and Recreation Committee
From:	General Manager, Shelter, Support and Housing Administration
Wards:	All
Reference Number:	

SUMMARY

This report responds to Community Development and Recreation Committee's request for a report on the supports that the City provides to help ensure shelter service providers are successful, including supports when a shelter service is in crisis. The report provides an overview of the different types of supports provided by Shelter, Support and Housing Administration to purchase of service shelter providers and other funded community not-for-profit organizations. These supports are part of the division's agency review and quality assurance processes.

This report also describes the enhanced monitoring provided when an agency is determined to be in difficulty. These supports were being provided by the City to Second Base Youth Shelter when its Board of Directors decided that the shelter would close at the end of October 2015.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. Community Development and Recreation Committee receive this report for information.

Financial Impact

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

Equity Impact

Housing and homelessness services, including shelter service, serve a range of equity seeking groups including people experiencing homelessness, the working poor, youth, seniors, Aboriginal people, and other vulnerable groups. The oversight provided by the City helps build capacity in the sector and supports stable service delivery.

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting on September 17, 2015, Community Development and Recreation Committee requested that the General Manager, Shelter, Support and Housing Administration report back to Committee on the supports that the City provides to help ensure shelter service providers are successful, including supports when a shelter service is in crisis, including Second Base and any other youth shelters that have closed in the last five years.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2015.CD6.5>

ISSUE BACKGROUND

Shelter, Support and Housing Administration (SSHA) is the Consolidated Service System Manager for housing and homelessness services. It is responsible for administering social housing programs, shelters and services that help people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness find and stabilize in housing.

SSHA has funding relationships through purchase of service contracts with 32 community-based not-for-profit agencies that operate 49 shelters for people experiencing homelessness across the city. As part of the City's operating agreement, these agencies much adhere to the Toronto Shelter Standards which set the minimum requirements and expectations for the delivery of shelter services.

COMMENTS

As part of SSHA's agency review process, staff carry out a number of functions to support and build capacity within funded agencies so that the quality of services delivered is in keeping with the Toronto Shelter Standards. These functions include:

- Annual site visits;
- Attendance at the agency's Annual General Meeting (AGM) and at least one Board meeting;
- Attendance at shelter residents' meetings;
- Complaints management that may involve additional site visits, review of shelter policies, and liaison with shelter staff;
- Community engagement activities including the coordination of and attendance at shelter sector meetings where common issues are discussed; and

- Establishing community workgroups, sometimes jointly with the local Councillor, to address any issues or concerns that may arise.

SSHA staff conduct annual budget reviews, which include a review of approved agency by-laws to ensure compliance regarding Board activities and general membership meetings. During these reviews, staff also examine: (a) public health inspection reports for compliance; (b) emergency plans for thoroughness, approval and updates; (c) mandatory training schedules for staff to determine compliance with Toronto Shelter Standards training requirements, and (d) financial review and analysis of Audited Statements and analysis of shelter revenue and expenditures.

Regular site visits and communication with agencies by staff ensure that the agencies are aware of program, financial and governance expectations as stipulated by the Toronto Shelter Standards. Any potential concerns or issues that arise through regular contact result in enhanced monitoring or supports that may involve the Board of Directors and include SSHA staff participation in governance meetings to support agency capacity.

Enhanced monitoring activities are tailored to the needs of the agency and based on the particular issues facing the agency. A key activity is developing a remediation work plan with the agency that includes timelines and benchmarks/outcomes related to the issues at hand. Other enhanced monitoring activities may also include more frequent and regular contact with the agency's senior management including its Executive Director, working with other funders such as the United Way and other City divisions, regular attendance at Board meetings by SSHA staff, developing a staff training plan to increase capacity or opportunities for interagency mentorship, and financial supports and bridge funding to support the agency in meeting the decided upon outcomes in the workplan.

SSHA staff may also provide supports to funded agencies at their request.

As the agencies are independent not-for-profit corporations with their own Board of Directors that are arm's length from the City, SSHA does not intervene in staffing and labour relations issues or complaints from the agency's vendors. The agency review role is focused on supporting the agencies to build capacity while ensuring accountability related to the services the City is purchasing while mitigating liability and risk.

The supports described above are generally successful at identifying and remedying performance issues at funded shelters. Dissolution of a shelter agency is rare. In the past five years, two youth shelters have made the decision close in different circumstances: Touchstone Youth Centre which closed its doors in November 2012 and Second Base Youth Shelter which will close at the end of October 2015.

Touchstone Youth Centre's Board of Directors made the decision to close due to ongoing financial challenges arising from an earlier pay equity ruling. At the time of its closure, the organization was in overall good standing with the City. As the City owns the building in which the shelter was operating, SSHA sought a replacement operator for the

facility through a competitive process. In May 2014, Kennedy House Youth Shelter opened its doors to replace the service that was lost with Touchstone's closing.

Second Base Youth Shelter is scheduled to close on October 20, 2015. A range of enhanced supports and monitoring activities were provided to the agency over several years and intensively in 2014 and 2015 prior to the Board of Directors' decision to close. Since 2005, City staff have worked with Second Base to address ongoing concerns related to governance, financial challenges and program delivery standards. Supports to the agency included financial assistance, establishing and participating in a community liaison committee, development of a Police relations protocol and regular attendance at Board meetings. In 2014, the City directed the agency to temporarily suspend services for a few weeks and used this period for staff training, policy development and cleanup of the interior and exterior of the building, including the removal of gang related graffiti. Staff liaised closely with the agency following resumption of services. Notwithstanding these efforts, the Board of Directors made the decision to close the shelter.

SSHA has consulted with the youth serving shelter sector on the parameters for a shelter program in Scarborough to replace Second Base and will release a Request for Proposals in October.

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SIGNATURE

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