



STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

Housing Support Assessment Tool Evaluation Funding Allocation

Date:	March 30, 2016
To:	Community Development and Recreation Committee
From:	Acting General Manager, Shelter, Support and Housing Administration
Wards:	All Wards
Reference Number:	

SUMMARY

Shelter, Support and Housing Administration (SSHA), along with the Centre for Research on Inner City Health at St. Michael's Hospital, have received approval for Provincial funding under the Treasury Board Secretariat. The City has been approved a total of \$50,000 over a 24 month period, to be used for the evaluation of a Housing Support Assessment Tool. This tool is intended to assess the level of acuity and support needs of people who are homeless, in order to assist them find and maintain housing.

This report seeks City Council approval to enter into a service agreement with the Centre for Research on Inner City Health and to increase the 2016 Approved Operating Budget for SSHA by \$29,250 gross and \$0 net and to include an additional \$20,750 gross and \$0 net in the 2017 Operating Budget Submission for SSHA.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Acting General Manager, Shelter, Support and Housing Administration (SSHA), recommends that:

1. City Council authorize the Acting General Manager, Shelter, Support and Housing Administration, and/or his designate to enter into a new service agreement with the Centre for Research on Inner City Health at St. Michael's Hospital to provide research and evaluation support for this initiative towards a final evaluation report. The maximum amount of the agreement shall not exceed \$50,000; and

2. City Council amend the 2016 Approved Operating Budget for SSHA by \$29,250 gross, \$0 net, and include the remaining \$20,750 gross and \$0 net in the 2017 Operating Budget Submission for SSHA to allow for the receipt and allocation of the Provincial funding dedicated to the evaluation of the Housing Assessment Tool.

Financial Impact

The Provincial Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) has approved the City's proposal for an evaluation of the Housing Support and Assessment Tool. The Province has approved funding for the partnering agency to provide evaluation of implementation of the tool. The Province will flow \$50,000 to the City over two years and as such requires an in-year budget adjustment to facilitate payments to the agency and cover the related costs the City will incur.

The following table details the anticipated expenses:

	2016	2017	Total
Grants			
Centre for Research on Inner City Health	\$ 29,250	\$ 20,750	\$ 50,000

The 2016 Approved Operating Budget for SSHA will be amended by \$29,250 gross and \$0 net with funding of \$20,750 gross and \$0 net to be included in the 2017 Operating Budget Submission for SSHA to deliver the programming.

The Deputy City Manager and Chief Financial Officer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information.

Equity Impact

The emergency shelter system in Toronto serves equity-seeking groups such as seniors, people with disabilities, individuals with mental health issues, the working poor, Aboriginal peoples, people who identify as LGBTQ2S and other vulnerable groups. Effectively assessing the supports needed to maintain housing is important in ensuring housing stability for these vulnerable groups.

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting of February 17, 2016, City Council approved EX12.12, "2016 Capital and Operating Budgets" which approved an operating budget for Shelter, Support and Housing Administration of \$668,803,700 gross and \$353,278,900 net.

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2016/ex/bgrd/backgroundfile-89176.pdf>

ISSUE BACKGROUND

The Local Poverty Reduction Fund is a provincial initiative to provide funding to local organizations and municipalities to support and evaluate programs that reduce poverty in Ontario. The focus is on developing evidence on the effectiveness of innovative practices that could then be implemented in other municipalities.

The initiative approved for evaluation funding is a pilot of the Housing Support Assessment Tool (HSAT). This tool is intended to assess the level of acuity and support needs of people who are homeless, in order to assist them to find and maintain housing. The tool, developed by SSHA, assesses a person's level of acuity or severity of need in 12 different components of service and provides a standardized score that indicates the level of support needed for them to be successful in housing. This assessment can then be used to:

- assist in service planning and design of emergency shelter programs and housing services with the right types of supports;
- identify the level of support clients may need to find and keep housing;
- manage staff caseloads more effectively; and
- compare client needs across programs and measure changes in client acuity over time.

Development of the HSAT builds on existing Housing First case management services being provided in the community and is intended to enhance shelter provider and housing worker capacity to effectively help people who are homeless to find and maintain permanent housing.

Development of a standardized assessment tool is one of the actions identified in SSHA's Housing Stability Service Plan approved by Council.

COMMENTS

The application was submitted in partnership with Dr. Stephen Hwang at the Centre for Research on Inner City Health at St Michael's Hospital, who will act as the third party evaluator on the project. As leading experts in homelessness program evaluation and assessment tools, they are well positioned to support the initiative.

The evaluation will focus on two primary research questions:

- Is the assessment tool effective in improving case planning with clients and housing outcomes for clients?
- Which components of service assessed by the tool are the best predictors of need for housing support and successful housing outcomes?

The pilot will involve implementation of the tool as part of the Hostels to Homes pilot for long term shelter stayers.

The approved funding is \$50,000 for incremental evaluation costs – primarily conducting follow-up surveys with clients, honorarium for clients participating in surveys and data analysis.

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SIGNATURE

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