

**Ward 10**

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**June 22, 2016**

**To: Community Development and Recreation Committee Members**

**From: Councillor James Pasternak, Chair**

**Re: Reviewing key aspects of the Housing Stabilization Fund**

**Background:**

The City of Toronto's Housing Stabilization Fund (HSF) assists Ontario Works (OW) and Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) clients to obtain and/or retain their housing or relocate to more appropriate or affordable accommodation. The Fund was established in 2013 following significant changes by the Province to housing and homelessness prevention services, most notably the elimination of the Community Start-Up and Maintenance Benefit (CSUMB) program and the introduction of the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI). The HSF is one component of CHPI which is explicitly focused on housing and homelessness prevention.

Given these changes, the HSF was established with a fixed funding envelope and an expanded client base (the addition of ODSP clients) compared to CSUMB, which was a mandatory benefit under OW and eligible only to OW clients. It was understood that 2013 would be a transitional year and HSF would be modified based on experience.

Reflecting this, based on extensive consultation and on-the-ground experience, TESS took a number of steps in 2013 to increase access to the Fund, including improved communication with clients, changed eligibility criteria and revised asset levels. As a result, applications increased, fewer clients were found ineligible and the average amount issued increased significantly.

In 2015, HSF was issued to approximately 24,500 individuals. Recently, however, concern has been raised about certain client eligibility criteria and processes and the allocation of funding across different program areas e.g. housing related expenses versus hydro expenses. Given the time since the last detailed examination of HSF and the issues raised by the community about its current operation, it is an opportune time to review the HSF program and its delivery in Toronto.

**Recommendation**

That the General Manager, Toronto Employment and Social Services, review key aspects of the Housing Stabilization Fund including current eligibility determination criteria, strategies for policy information dissemination and clarity and the allocation of funding to support essential furniture replacement, including consultation with key stakeholders, and report back to the Community Development and Recreation Committee in the fourth quarter of 2016.

Sincerely,

James Pasternak  
Councillor, Ward 10  
Chair, Community Development and Recreation Committee