



## REPORT FOR ACTION

### Implementation of Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy

**Date:** February 21, 2019

**To:** Economic and Community Development Committee

**From:** General Manager, Shelter, Support and Housing Administration

**Wards:** All

#### SUMMARY

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The Government of Canada has announced that on April 1, 2019, the Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) will be replaced by Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy. The City of Toronto has applied to act as the Community Entity for Toronto and has been advised that the Toronto Designated Community allocation of Reaching Home funding will be \$123,548,447 over five years. Toronto will also be receiving an allocation from the federal Community Capacity and Innovation (CCI) funding stream; however, the amount of this allocation remains unknown.

Shelter, Support and Housing Administration (SSHA) is in the process of negotiating a Contribution Agreement with Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC). However, the agreement has not yet been finalized. It is anticipated that the agreement will be finalized before March 31, 2019 when the current HPS agreement ends. In order to ensure service continuity, this report seeks authority to undertake the necessary actions to enter into the Contribution Agreement, on terms satisfactory to the General Manager, Shelter, Support and Housing Administration and in a form approved by the City Solicitor, upon receipt of the agreement and to receive and allocate this federal funding and ensure continued delivery of homelessness and housing support services.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. City Council authorize the General Manager, Shelter, Support and Housing Administration, to enter into a Contribution Agreement with Employment and Social Development Canada or related entity necessary for the receipt and expenditure of funding under the Reaching Home funding program and to undertake appropriate measures as the program proceeds to adjust program parameters, recipients and year end funding among program components as required to ensure full and effective use of available federal funds, on such terms and conditions as are satisfactory to the General

Manager, Shelter, Support and Housing Administration, and in a form approved by the City Solicitor;

2. City Council approve the receipt of the new Reaching Home program funds for provision of homelessness and housing support services under Canada's Homelessness Strategy, in line with the terms and conditions of the Contribution Agreement and any related directives or program guidelines;

3. City Council increase the Approved City Operating Budget for Shelter, Support and Housing Administration by \$1,256,071 gross and \$0 net in 2019 to be funded from the City's allocation of Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy, with future year requests subject to Council approval through the annual budget process;

4. City Council authorize the General Manager, Shelter, Support and Housing Administration, to develop a Community Plan, outlining funding priorities, in line with the terms and conditions of the Contribution Agreement and any related directives;

5. City Council authorize the General Manager, Shelter, Support and Housing Administration, to enter into agreements or other suitable arrangements with other City divisions, provincial agencies, community agencies, private entities and/or individuals to allocate and deliver Reaching Home funding in accordance with the federal program guidelines;

6. City Council authorize the General Manager, Shelter, Support and Housing Administration, to enter into a Contribution Agreement or amending agreement with Employment and Social Development Canada or related entity necessary for the receipt and expenditure of funding under the Community Capacity and Innovation funding stream of the Reaching Home program, on such terms and conditions as are satisfactory to the General Manager, Shelter, Support and Housing Administration, and in a form approved by the City Solicitor, and make any necessary in-year budget adjustments to receive the funds; and

7. City Council direct the General Manager, Shelter, Support and Housing Administration, to develop an Indigenous (First Nations, Inuit and Métis) funding stream in partnership with local Indigenous organizations and associations, with a minimum target of 20% of new Reaching Home funding, and report to Aboriginal Affairs Committee or the appropriate Standing Committee on the agreed structure of this funding stream.

## **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

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SSHA's approved 2019 Operating Budget will be increased by \$1,256,071 gross and \$0 net subject to Council approval through the annual budget process:

2018 HPS Allocation	2019 HPS/Reaching Home Allocation	Funding Enhancement	Portion of Enhancement Available for Administration
21,620,486	22,876,557	1,256,071	509,447

Incremental funding from the Reaching Home program is not currently included in SSHA's 2019 Staff Recommended Budget. Further amendments to SSHA's 2019 Council Approved Budget will be required should Council adopt the recommendations in the report. The criteria for use of the funding is not fully established. Staff, as a notional allocation, are recommending the incremental 2019 funding increase of \$1,256,071 be used to:

- Dedicate 20% of the incremental increase to an Indigenous funding stream (\$251,214 in 2019; \$334,952 annualized);
- Support the implementation and administration of the Reaching Home program, including the implementation of Coordinated Access and ongoing point in time counts; and
- Invest any additional funding in programs that improve housing outcomes for people experiencing homelessness and contribute to the Reaching Home objective of reducing chronic homelessness.

Toronto's Reaching Home allocation is projected as follows (all figures gross, and \$0 net):

Year	Jan-Mar	Apr-Dec	<b>Total Funding</b>	Admin (15% flat)
2019		17,471,435	<b>17,471,435</b>	2,620,715
2020	5,823,812	17,471,435	<b>23,295,247</b>	3,494,287
2021	5,823,812	19,239,488	<b>25,063,300</b>	3,759,495
2022	6,413,163	19,239,488	<b>25,652,651</b>	3,847,898
2023	6,413,163	19,239,488	<b>25,652,651</b>	3,847,898
2024	6,413,163		<b>6,413,163</b>	961,974
<b>Total</b>	<b>30,887,112</b>	<b>92,661,335</b>	<b>123,548,447</b>	18,532,267

Up to 15% of the total allocation may be used towards administration costs, as reflected above. The allocation may be used to fund staff positions that will contribute to the implementation of Coordinated Access and point in time counts (Toronto's Street Needs Assessment). SSHA will report on the staffing implications of implementing Reaching

Home through a budget adjustment when the program requirements and final allocations have been received.

## **EQUITY IMPACT**

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Projects funded through the Reaching Home program will seek to improve services provided to people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, which includes equity seeking groups such as Indigenous communities, women, seniors, people with disabilities, individuals with mental health issues, and other vulnerable groups in the City of Toronto.

## **DECISION HISTORY**

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At its meeting of December 16, 17 and 18, 2013, City Council unanimously adopted the 2014-2019 Housing Stability Service Planning Framework, which includes nine strategic directions and a number of key actions to transform Toronto's housing stability service system:

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2013.CD25.10>.

On November 13, 2013, City Council adopted CD24.6, 2014/15 Funding Allocations from the Provincial Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative, the City of Toronto - Homeless Initiatives Fund, and the Federal Homelessness Partnering Strategy, which included authority to enter into a renewal of HPS from 2014 to 2019:

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2013.CD24.6>.

## **COMMENTS**

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### **Overview of Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy**

The Government of Canada's redesigned homelessness program will launch April 1, 2019, following the conclusion of the existing Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS). The federal government has been investing in homeless services through various iterations of the HPS program since 2001. The first program, Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative (SCPI), was replaced by several rounds of HPS funding, which has now been renamed Reaching Home for the 2019-2024 funding term. As the designated Community Entity, the City has invested the HPS funding in a variety of community-based programs that help people find and keep housing, including community-based housing help, housing help in shelters, drop-in services, employment supports, Streets to Homes outreach and housing support services, and system supports such as sector networks.

Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy is a \$2.2 billion national investment over ten years, designed to support the goals of the National Housing Strategy, in particular, to support the most vulnerable Canadians in maintaining safe, stable and affordable housing, and to reduce chronic homelessness nationally by 50% by 2027-2028. Specific components of the overall program are summarized below.

***Coordinated Access:***

Reaching Home requires Community Entities to implement a Coordinated Access system by 2022. Service providers will use a common information management system and work together to assess, triage and prioritize individuals for services in a consistent manner. SSHA is currently in the process of implementing a Coordinated Access system to match clients with housing and supports and is well positioned to meet the new Reaching Home requirements. SSHA piloted this initiative in 2017 and is in the process of implementing this system more broadly through the Home for Good program.

***Information Technology System:***

Federal funding will be provided to Designated Communities to help them implement Coordinated Access, including adopting the necessary information technology infrastructure. Additional funding to support the development of Coordinated Access and information technology infrastructure is expected to be provided through a Community Capacity and Innovation funding stream, but Toronto has not yet been notified of its allocation.

The City of Toronto currently uses the Shelter Management Information System (SMIS) and enhancements to data systems are planned to better support implementation of the Coordinated Access system, including client assessment and housing outcome tracking.

***Outcomes Based Approach:***

The new program adopts an outcomes based approach. Communities will demonstrate progress and tangible actions to improve their homelessness response by reporting publicly on results in an annual Community Progress Report beginning in 2020-2021. With the exception of a reduction of 50% in chronic homelessness by 2027-2028, communities will set their own targets for each outcome.

***Increased Flexibility for Communities:***

Housing First continues to be a very important evidence-based approach for reducing chronic homelessness and continues to be supported under Reaching Home. However, the previous HPS target for communities to spend 65% of funding on Housing First initiatives will be removed. Reaching Home is outcomes focused and communities will be accountable to achieve a 50% reduction in chronic homelessness.

***Community Planning Process:***

Designated Communities will be required to develop a comprehensive Community Plan which identifies local needs and funding priorities, through an inclusive community process and endorsed by a Community Advisory Board (CAB), a local organizing committee responsible for setting direction and coordinating efforts at addressing homelessness in a community. The Toronto Alliance to End Homelessness (TAEH) will continue to act as Toronto's CAB for the Reaching Home program. SSHA also engages and coordinates with the Toronto Indigenous Community Entity, the Aboriginal Labour Force Development Circle, which administers the Indigenous stream funding in Toronto, and its Indigenous CAB.

The Community Planning process will be coordinated with development of the City's 10 year Housing Strategy and SSHA's next Housing Stability Service Plan. Further details about the process and required elements have not yet been provided by ESDC.

### ***Street Needs Assessments:***

Under Reaching Home and the provincial legislated requirement, biennial point in time counts, like Toronto's Street Needs Assessment (SNA), are mandatory. Given the scale of the SNA, dedicated resources will be required to meet this obligation and ESDC has indicated that CCI funds will be made available to facilitate implementation of this project on an ongoing basis.

### **Community Capacity and Innovation Funding Stream**

A new Community Capacity and Innovation (CCI) funding stream will be introduced in 2019 to support the implementation of Coordinated Access and ongoing Toronto Street Needs Assessments. ESDC is still developing the details of the CCI stream and has not yet informed Toronto of its allocation. SSHA has been advised to budget for Coordinated Access and Street Needs Assessment implementations within existing project funding. This will not have an impact on currently funded projects. When Toronto receives its allocation, the project funding will be reallocated to community-based projects. SSHA will report on the staffing implications of implementing Reaching Home through a budget adjustment when the program requirements and final allocations have been received.

### **Transition Year**

Recognizing the time it will take to set community priorities and issue a funding application, Reaching Home includes a transition year for currently funded projects. SSHA has requested a second transition year to allow for completion of the City's new 10-year Housing Plan and SSHA Service Plan. SSHA has not yet received approval of this request from ESDC.

In 2013, City Council authorized the alignment of several SSHA grant funding streams, including the federal HPS, Ontario's Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI) and Toronto's Homeless Initiatives Fund (HIF). SSHA will maintain this alignment, which simplifies elements of the administration of funding. As such, over 130 currently funded projects will be renewed from April 1, 2019 to March 31, 2020.

As noted above, the incremental 2019 funding increase of \$1,256,071 will be used to:

- dedicate 20% of the incremental increase to an Indigenous funding stream (\$251,214 in 2019; \$334,952 annualized);
- support the implementation and administration of the Reaching Home program, including the implementation of Coordinated Access and ongoing point in time counts. SSHA will report on the staffing implications of implementing Reaching

Home through a budget adjustment when the program requirements and final allocations have been received; and

- invest any additional funding in programs that improve housing outcomes for people experiencing homelessness and contribute to the Reaching Home objective of reducing chronic homelessness.

## **Ongoing Allocations**

Following the transition year - or two years if approved by ESDC - SSHA will release a funding application for community organizations based on service priorities that have been developed through the Community Planning Process. This will include funding available through CHPI, HIF and Home for Good.

Applications will be assessed using a fair and transparent process and recommendations will be made to the CAB for review and discussion to ensure alignment with established priorities. Results of the funding application will be posted on Open Data.

## **Indigenous Funding Stream**

On June 25, 2018, Aboriginal Affairs Committee received for information a presentation on the Meeting in the Middle Engagement Strategy and Action Plan. The Meeting in the Middle plan was co-created to foster better relationships between SSHA and Indigenous organizations and identify actions to more meaningfully address Indigenous (First Nations, Inuit and Métis) homelessness in Toronto by addressing the City of Toronto's Statement of Commitments to Aboriginal Communities.

Indigenous people are overrepresented in the Toronto homeless population, as consistently shown in all four Street Needs Assessments led by SSHA. The 2018 SNA revealed that Indigenous people make up at least 16% of the homeless population and 38% of the outdoor homeless population.

Commitment 3 of Meeting in the Middle states that the City commits to working with Indigenous partners to explore ways to strengthen the capacity of Indigenous organizations and associations to plan, lead, and deliver initiatives for local Indigenous communities. This includes addressing capacity building supports for Indigenous organizations in any revision of SSHA's Service Plan and Investment Plan, as well as in other program and policy development initiatives. This may include dedicating a percentage of funds to Indigenous communities, and exploring ways of providing funding to Indigenous organizations to administer directly.

SSHA will explore opportunities to develop an Indigenous funding stream in partnership with Indigenous organizations that commits a dedicated portion of funding to Indigenous organizations and associations and ensures leadership for decision making regarding funding priorities and allocations is made by local Indigenous communities through the Indigenous Community Advisory Board. SSHA will target 20% of grants program funding to this Indigenous funding stream through a phased implementation as currently-funded projects end and new applications for grants funding are released.

Development of the funding stream will take place over the coming months, in partnership with Toronto's Indigenous Community Entity for Reaching Home - Aboriginal Labour Force Development Circle - and the Indigenous CAB.

## **CONTACT**

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## **SIGNATURE**

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