

Request for Decision

Out of the Cold Emergency Shelter Program

Presented To: Community Services
Committee

Presented: Monday, Jul 06, 2015

Report Date Thursday, Jun 11, 2015

Type: Managers' Reports

Recommendation

WHEREAS the City of Greater Sudbury receives funding from the Federal, Provincial and Municipal levels of government to fund Homelessness Initiatives;

AND WHEREAS the City of Greater Sudbury partners with local services providers to provide emergency shelter programs within the City of Greater Sudbury;

AND WHEREAS the Salvation Army has operated the men's emergency shelter program and the women and families emergency shelter program within the City of Greater Sudbury for many years;

AND WHEREAS the Salvation Army operated the Out of the Cold Emergency Shelter Program from February to March 2014 and from December 2014 to March 2015;

AND WHEREAS there is a need to continue to provide a shelter program for persons who are under the influence or otherwise disconnected from mainstream shelter programs;

AND WHEREAS there were no successful bidders for the Request for Proposals for the Out of the Cold Emergency Shelter Program issued in October 2014;

AND WHEREAS there is a need to provide an adequate facility for the operation of an Out of the Cold Emergency Shelter Program;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the City of Greater Sudbury enter into a sole source funding agreement with the Salvation Army to administer the Out of the Cold Emergency Shelter Program from November 1st, 2015 to April 15th, 2016;

AND THAT the City of Greater Sudbury provides space on the main floor of the facility at 200 Larch Street, Sudbury for use for this program;

AND THAT the City of Greater Sudbury provides up to \$50,000 to complete the necessary fire separation requirements.

Signed By

Report Prepared By

Gail Spencer
Coordinator of Shelters and
Homelessness
Digitally Signed Jun 11, 15

Health Impact Review

Gail Spencer
Coordinator of Shelters and
Homelessness
Digitally Signed Jun 11, 15

Recommended by the Department

Tim P. Beadman
General Manager of Health, Social and
Emergency Services
Digitally Signed Jun 12, 15

Recommended by the C.A.O.

Bob Johnston
Interim Chief Administrative Officer
Digitally Signed Jun 17, 15

Finance Implications

If approved, the operating costs will be funded by Provincial Community Homelessness Prevention Initiatives (CHPI) and the capital costs will be funded by Federal Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) with no tax levy impact.

Health Impact Assessment

This program addresses barriers and is intended to enhance services to persons who are chronically homeless. Service data will be collected to monitor the results by program usage.

Background

In 2013 the City of Greater Sudbury completed a Ten Year Housing and Homelessness Plan. One of the priorities identified was: *There is a need to strengthen approaches to preventing homelessness, increase the diversity of emergency shelter options and support individuals with multiple barriers in obtaining and maintaining their housing.*

An action item for this priority was to: *Review eligibility criteria for existing shelters and/or reallocate funding to ensure emergency accommodation meets the diverse range of needs, including emergency accommodation that does not have a zero alcohol tolerance.*

Establishing an emergency shelter that allows for persons who are under the influence and provides a safe place for all is also a priority that has been identified under a Harm Reduction Initiative through the Value Stream Mapping and Kaizan events (March and May 2014) conducted by the NELHINS with over 17 partner agencies.

Out of the Cold Pilot Project

The City of Greater Sudbury (CGS) partnered with the Salvation Army to provide an Out of the Cold (OTC) pilot project from February 19th, 2014 to March 31st, 2014. The Salvation Army utilized an empty space at their facility located at 146 Larch Street, Sudbury, adjoining the men's emergency shelter program. The program was open from 8:00 pm until 7:00 am every evening, and provided temporary cots and a safe warm environment for anyone who wanted to access the program.

The program was intended to provide service to both male and female persons with no registration or eligibility requirements. Persons under the influence of alcohol or drugs were allowed access to the program, as long as the level of intoxication did not pose a serious risk to their health and safety. No alcohol or drugs were allowed within the facility. Two support staff and one security person were available at all times.

There were a total of 417 visits by persons who accessed the program over the course of the pilot, an average of 10 per night. The maximum number on any given night was 19. The average number of clients during the early weeks of the program was 6, and the average for the later weeks of the program was 14 per night as the program became better known among the Community.

Persons accessing the program stated they used it for the following reasons:

1. A safe place to sleep
2. Weather conditions
3. Under the influence

4. Barring barriers from other services

The OTC Pilot project successfully filled a gap that has been identified in the existing services that currently are provided to homeless persons in our Community. Service was provided to the most vulnerable of the homeless population who may not access existing services for a variety of reasons such as, being banned, having no identification, being under the influence of drugs or alcohol, or not meeting other eligibility criteria.

Request for Proposal - September 2014

Following recommendation of Council, a Request for Proposal was issued in September 2014 seeking a service provider to provide an OTC Shelter Program for November 1, 2014 to March 31, 2015. One proposal was submitted and that proposal did not meet the minimum requirements set out within the Request for Proposal specifications, so therefore there was no successful applicant for this RFP.

Out of the Cold Program December 1, 2014 to April 15, 2015

CGS has partnered with the Salvation Army to provide Emergency Shelter Programs for men, women and families for over ten years. The Salvation Army has demonstrated the ability to successfully provide Emergency Shelter Programs within our Community, and successfully provided the Out of the Cold Pilot Project in February and March of 2014.

CGS staff approached the Salvation Army to provide the OTC Emergency Shelter Program for 2014/2015. While the Salvation Army had the staffing and experience to provide this Program, they did not have an adequate facility, which they stated was the reason they did not apply for the RFP.

CGS approved the use of the main floor of the City owned facility located at 200 Larch Street for this purpose. Approximately \$47,000 in upgrades to life safety requirements were completed in November 2014 to support a change of use permit and allow the Program to open on December 1, 2014.

Funding for the renovations to the facility and the operation of the Out of the Cold Emergency Shelter Program came from the Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) Federal Funding.

The OTC Emergency Shelter Program was operated by the Salvation Army from December 4, 2014 to March 31, 2015. In order to expand the length of the Program, volunteers the Red Cross operated the OTC Program from December 1 to 4, 2014 and from April 1 to 15, 2015.

The program offered up to 30 cots for sleeping, as well as access to warm drinks, soup and snacks. Clean dry socks, hats, mitts and clothing were available for those who needed it. The program was intended to provide service to both male and female persons aged 16 years and over with no registration or eligibility requirements. Persons under the influence of alcohol or drugs were allowed access to the Program, as long as the level of intoxication did not pose a serious risk to their health and safety. No alcohol or drugs were allowed within the facility. Two support staff and two security persons were available at all times.

Connections were made with outreach teams, social services and front line police officers who were able to help people access this Program. On January 19, 2015 a "Meet and Greet" was held at the OTC shelter for front line outreach teams, social workers and police officers to be able to tour the facility, meet the staff and answer any questions.

Between December 4, 2014 and March 31, 2015 there were 4,430 visits to the Program, representing on average 36 people per night. Between 15 and 30 persons accessed a cot for sleeping each night, and others used the facility as a safe, warm place to get a cup of coffee or bowl of soup. Reports from shelter staff indicated that clients stated to them that they were unable to secure housing or access the mainstream shelter programs due to multiple barriers including alcohol or drug use, mental illness, discrimination, poverty, family conflict and transience.

A review of this Program indicates it is a valuable addition to the existing network of homelessness supports provided within the City of Greater Sudbury. The Program met the needs of the most vulnerable and chronically homeless within our Community who have multiple barriers and are disconnected from mainstream services. Plans for further development of this program include possible expansion to a 12-month program and direct connection to a Managed Alcohol Program being developed by the Canadian Mental Health Association.

Co-Location with Harm Reduction Home

The need to enhance services for persons who are chronically homeless and have active addictions has been identified within the Community. Over the past year the North East Local Health Integration Network (NELHIN), Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), hospital, community partners and CGS staff have been working together to explore community resources for meeting the needs of this vulnerable population within these three priorities:

1. Establishing an emergency shelter that allows for persons who are under the influence and provides a safe place for all.
2. Developing a managed alcohol program (MAP). MAP's are residential services that follow a harm reduction model, including supportive counseling, housing, social and clinical health services for persons who are chronically homeless with an active alcohol addiction.
3. Providing intensive case management and housing support to support transition to permanent housing.

It has been recognized that the co-location of the harm reduction home, emergency shelter programs, and a primary health care clinic will be of significant benefit to increased collaboration and efficiencies between operation of services, as well as seamless provision of service to clients. The Canadian Mental Health Association is seeking a suitable facility for the co-location of:

1. Harm Reduction Home- operated by CMHA
2. Out of the Cold Emergency Shelter Program – operated by the Salvation Army
3. Men's Emergency Shelter Program - operated by the Salvation Army
4. Corner Clinic health care – operated by Centre de Sante and Shekagmekwe

Should the OTC Emergency Shelter Program be co-located with these other programs, there is potential for an extension of the Program to a 12-month program. Funding for the OTC Emergency Shelter Program comes from the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI) Provincial Funding and/or the Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) Federal Funding.

Out of the Cold Emergency Shelter Program November 1, 2015 to April 15, 2016

The OTC Emergency Shelter Program has been determined to be a successful and much needed program to provide support for the most vulnerable chronically homeless persons within our Community. Should the Canadian Mental Health Association be unsuccessful in locating a facility for the co-location of the four programs by November 2015, it is important to move forward with the planning of the OTC Emergency Shelter program for 2015/2016.

When the facility at 200 Larch Street was used for the operation of the OTC program from December 2014 to April 2015, there was a change of use permit required. Should the program be approved to continue at this location, further life safety requirements will need to be upgraded at an estimated cost of \$50,000.

The Salvation Army has successfully provided the OTC program from February to March 2014 and from December 2014 to March 2015. The Salvation Army successfully operates the men's Emergency Shelter Program and the Women's and Families Emergency Shelter Program under evergreen contracts with CGS.

The Salvation Army has trained experienced staff and the organizational capacity to operate this program. During the RFP process in September 2014 there were no successful bidders. A sole source purchase is being recommended in accordance with the By-Law 2014-1: By-Law of the City of Greater Sudbury Governing Procurement Policies and Procedures.

Funding

OTC operating expenses and capital upgrade expenses can be funded through the Provincial Community Homelessness Prevention Initiatives (CHPI) funding and the Federal Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) funding.

Recommendation

That the City of Greater Sudbury enter into a sole source funding agreement with the Salvation Army to administer the Out of the Cold Emergency Shelter Program from November 1, 2015 to April 15, 2016; and

That the City of Greater Sudbury provide the main floor of 200 Larch Street, Sudbury for use for this program; and

That the City of Greater Sudbury provide up to \$50,000 to complete the necessary fire separation requirements.