

Request for Decision

Red Cross Disaster Relief Fund

Presented To: Community Services
Committee

Presented: Monday, Apr 30, 2012

Report Date Tuesday, Apr 24, 2012

Type: Managers' Reports

Recommendation

THAT the City of Greater Sudbury authorize an annual grant to the Canadian Red Cross in each of the years 2013 – 2017, of up to \$20,000 per year, to be advanced on a reimbursement basis for authorized costs incurred in the delivery of the Red Cross Personal Disaster Assistance Program;

AND THAT the appropriate by-law be passed;

AND THAT that the Chief of Emergency Services be authorized to sign a funding agreement with the Canadian Red Cross on behalf of the City of Greater Sudbury for the Personal Disaster Assistance Program.

Finance Implications

The cost of up to \$20,000 be funded from the Emergency Management operating budget.

The 2012 Emergency Management operating budget was approved with a \$20,000 grant to support the Personal Disaster Assistance Program, and as a result no further additional funds are required at this time.

Request for Decision

Request for approval of an annual grant of up to \$20,000 to the Canadian Red Cross, Sudbury Branch for costs incurred in the operation of the Red Cross Personal Disaster Assistance Program.

Background

Every year, disasters kill thousands of people around the world and injure many more. Disasters don't just happen in other countries. They can strike anywhere, at any time. The City of Greater Sudbury is not immune to disasters.

The Canadian Red Cross helps thousands of people in crisis ranging from house fires and chemicals spills to large scale disasters, such as floods and forest fires. The goal of the Red Cross Personal Disaster

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Assistance Program is to alleviate human suffering and maintain human dignity by providing for the basic needs of the victims. The services and training provided by the Red Cross Personal Disaster Assistance Program are not available from the City of Greater Sudbury. Attached is a copy of the "Red Cross Disaster Services Summary which provides details of the program.

The City of Greater Sudbury has been providing funding to the Canadian Red Cross on a reimbursement basis to support its delivery of the Personal Disaster Assistance Program since 2001. From 2001 until 2007, funding was provided at a level of up to \$10,000. In 2008, Council authorized a funding increase of up to \$20,000 in recognition of the increasing demands on the Canadian Red Cross in the delivery of this valuable program. By-law 2008-11 authorized funding on a multi-year basis, ending with the 2012 calendar year. It is proposed to continue funding for a further five (5) year period from 2013 to 2017 to provide for the continued delivery of the Personal Disaster Assistance Program. Without this funding, Red Cross could not sustain the program at the current level.

The aim of the program is to help individuals reduce the impact of disasters and emergencies. Personal disaster may include but not limited to:

- flood
- fire
- gas leak
- hostage taking
- explosion
- interruption of public services
- public health crisis

The Personal Disaster Assistance Program is available throughout the City of Greater Sudbury on a twenty-four hour, seven day-a-week basis via the local Red Cross network of trained emergency response volunteers. Red Cross volunteers provide on-site emotional support and can offer victims at no cost, the following services for up to 72 hours through established agreements with suppliers:

- accommodations
- flood
- clothing
- personal care items
- immediate medical needs (ie. medication)

Red Cross is activated upon request by the City's Emergency Services (EMS, Police, Fire, and Infrastructure Services) personnel. With the immediate needs of disaster victims taken care of, Emergency Services personnel are able to focus their efforts on responding to the emergency.

The amount of aid each person receives depends on family composition and results of a personal needs assessment conducted by a Red Cross volunteer.

The following table summarizes the utilization of the Personal Disaster Assistance Program over the last five (5) years. Unspent funds in any year are posted to Emergency Management's corporate year-end surplus position.

Year (Sept 1 – Aug 31)	# of incidents	# of Clients	Annual Cost
2007 – 2008	24	114	\$20,375.64
2008 – 2009	24	67	\$22,591.98
2009 – 2010	18	90	\$15,539.47
2010 – 2011	29	88	\$18,244.47
2011 – 2012 (Apr 1)*	14	174	\$14,141.60

*Billing period: year-to-date

Red Cross Disaster Services - Summary

Disaster can strike any of us and any community. It is not a question of if, but a question of when and where.

We respond. Anytime a disaster strikes, the Red Cross responds at a moment's notice to help the victims rebuild their lives. Immediately following a disaster, we make sure victims have food, clothing and a place to stay.

We assist. Once the emergency phase of a disaster has passed, trained Red Cross workers meet with disaster victims and provide them with the information and assistance to get back on their feet. We provide emergency financial assistance or essential items to individuals or families who are in need.

We comfort. As seen during the Kashechewan floods, the North West Forest Fires, the Wind Storm, the Pine Lake Tornado, the Ice Storms, the Manitoba Flood, the Attawapiskat Flood, the Thunder Bay Forest Fire, the Halfway Lake Microburst and the Shawanaga train derailment, trained Red Cross volunteers helped provide people with comfort during and in the aftermath of disasters. They provide a hand to hold, an ear to listen and a shoulder to lean on.

We train. Red Cross Disaster Response Teams are prepared for deployment at all times. These teams are made up of volunteers across Ontario who undergo intensive disaster training. Efforts are coordinated locally, provincially and nationally to maximize resources and efficiencies. In Ontario, we have more than 3,000 fully trained volunteers.

We partner. The Red Cross works with Emergency Management of Ontario, several municipalities and Amateur Radio to deliver cohesive services and avoid duplication. Red Cross is often the agency of choice during disaster responses. For example, in 1999, Operation Parasol teamed Red Cross with Citizenship and Immigration Canada and the Canadian Armed Forces to provide assistance on a scale never before seen in Canada. Red Cross volunteers provided food, shelter and other essential services to more than 5,000 Kosovo refugees on seven Canadian Forces Bases, including three in Ontario.

We prepare. Throughout the years, Red Cross staff and volunteers provided hundreds of hours of emergency preparedness information and training to community groups, professional agencies and municipalities. Many people receive information which teaches emergency preparedness for any kind of unexpected situation.

Disaster Services Case Statement

Statement of Need-Issues

Experiences such as the Kashechewan floods, the North West Forest Fires, the Wind Storm, the Pine Lake Tornado, the Ice Storms, the Manitoba flood, the Attawapiskat flood, the Thunder Bay Forest Fires, the Halfway Lake Microburst and the Shawanaga train derailment, prove Canada is not immune to disasters. These calamities displaced many Canadians and caused billions of dollars in damage. The effects of smaller scale disasters such as house fires, explosions and gas leaks can be just as devastating to its victims as any major catastrophe. Victims experience feelings of helplessness when they are forced from their homes, and risk losing their loved ones, their possessions and their security.

Disasters may be caused by a variety of natural, technological or human-made events, and include incidents such as extreme weather conditions, earthquakes, fires, chemical spills etc. They can be small in scale, affecting one or a few families, or large, affecting entire communities. Regardless of the cause and magnitude, those affected often require temporary assistance with food, clothing, shelter, medical care and other necessities. Entire communities affected by disaster may experience temporary disruptions of their economic and social structures that can cause or add to the suffering of its residents.

Sometimes, only short-term assistance (48-72 hours) is required, while in other circumstances such as the Slave Lake Fires of 2011, relief needs to be extensive and persist for many weeks and/or months. It can also take many hours or days for necessary relief to reach those affected – in the meantime, the most vulnerable are left to care for themselves.

In Ontario, diverse geography and climate makes each region prone to unique disaster threats. The prevalence of forest fires in Northern Ontario can lead to wide spread forest fires. Just last year, Northern residents had been forced to evacuate from their homes and were displaced to many communities throughout the province.

Our Mission

To improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity in Canada and around the World.

Program Goal

The aim of Red Cross Disaster Services is to help individuals and communities prepare for and reduce the impact of disasters and emergencies, and to ensure all those affected have access to basic needs such as food, shelter and clothing.

Program Objectives

- To ensure Disaster Services Teams are trained and ready to respond across Ontario.
- To build our Personal Disaster Assistance Programs, which provide personal disaster assistance to people who are affected by a house fire or other small-scale emergencies.
- To commit to a strong provincial direction that ensures linkages, accountability and integration within the organization at all levels.

Program Description

The Red Cross provides personal disaster assistance to victims of both large and small-scale emergencies in Canada as part of local emergency response plans. An auxiliary to government in disaster relief, the Red Cross will not replace or undermine government responsibility where potential for appropriate government action exist, but rather work in partnership to ensure a coordinated approach. There are four components to the Red Cross Disaster Services program: **mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery.**

Mitigation:

This phase covers all of the activities that reduce the effects of disasters.

Preparedness:

Emergency Preparedness Canada defines this as any activity that will eliminate or reduce the probability of a disaster occurrence, or serve to postpone, mitigate or lessen the effects of a disaster. Disasters can never be eliminated entirely; therefore, it is important to increase the capacity of individuals and communities to respond to a disaster by planning and preparing for disasters.

Red Cross also works with municipalities to create, update and test their disaster response plans and ensures that communities across Ontario have emergency and disaster response teams, ready to respond at a moment's notice.

Response:

Through a network of trained volunteers, the Red Cross is always prepared to respond immediately when a disaster or emergency occurs locally, nationally, and internationally. Disaster Services volunteers are on stand-by 24 hours a day, 365 days a year in communities across Ontario. Their role is to ensure victims of disasters receive basic needs such as food, shelter, clothing, first aid, emotional support and family reunification.

The Red Cross is called to an emergency or disaster by the emergency response agencies at the scene (police, fire, ambulance) and can be asked to provide any of the following response services:

- **Fire Recovery:** Personal disaster assistance is provided to individuals and families directly affected by a fire. Throughout Ontario, the Red Cross team is partnering with Fire Departments and other non-governmental agencies, to assist victims after a fire by providing essential services at the scene. These include Registration & Inquiry, food, shelter, and clothing 24 hours a day for the first 72 hours.
- **Reception Centre and Shelter Management:** This involves the set-up and operation of temporary facilities for those affected by medium or large-scale disasters. Red Cross will arrange for lodging, feeding, clothing and distribution of “comfort kits” (soap, toothbrush, deodorant and other personal hygiene items) for people evacuated from their homes.
- **Registration and Inquiry (R&I):** The ability to locate people who have been displaced during an emergency is critical. The Red Cross has an agreement with the federal government to provide registration and inquiry to those affected by a disaster. This involves registering information about evacuees and informing loved ones of their whereabouts.
- **Personal Services:** Red Cross provides flexible services that may be unique to each emergency situation. In the past, they have included comfort kits, blankets, teddy bears for children, transportation and the replacement of basic household items, child and health-related items.
- **Resource Management:** The Red Cross has channelled millions of dollars to help victims of disasters both in Canada and around the world, as well as providing the skills and services of more than 3,000 fully trained volunteers.

Recovery:

In the recovery phase of disasters, when the media spotlight has often shifted elsewhere, Red Cross remains on the scene, helping those affected, to rebuild their lives and their communities. The Red Cross assists those who have the least capacity to meet their own needs, those living in poverty or who are otherwise deemed as most vulnerable as a result of the disaster. This group includes individuals who may not be able to obtain insurance due to the nature of the disaster, such as some flood victims.

Volunteer Training:

As communities and various levels of government rely more on a partnership with the Red Cross to manage disasters, we must prepare to respond in the most effective manner. Highly trained Red Cross Emergency and Disaster Response Teams, made up of volunteers across Ontario are prepared for deployment at all times. Efforts are coordinated locally, provincially and nationally to maximize resources and efficiencies. In Ontario, we have more than 3,000 volunteers who are trained in Emergency Response, Logistics, Reception Management, Registration & Inquiry, and Volunteer Coordination.

Achievements:

Red Cross has utilized its disaster response expertise in a variety of emergency situations in the past 15 years. Major Responses include:

- 2011 – Alberta Fire Responses (Alberta, Slave Lake, and Edmonton)
- 2011 – Northern Forest Fires
- 2008 – Kashechewan Floods
- 2006 – Wind Storm
- 2006 – Northern Flood Evacuations
- 2006 – North West Forest Fires
- 2005 – Kashechewan Medical Evacuation
- 2005 – Sagamok First Nations Evacuation
- 2004 – Peterborough Floods
- 2003 – North America Blackout
- 2003 – Parry Sound SARS
- 2003 – Shawanaga Train Derailment
- 2002 – Halfway Lake Microburst
- 2002 – Thunder Bay Forest Fire
- 2002 – Attawapiskat Floods
- 2001 – Terrorist Attack – September 11th
- 2001 – Pine Lake Tornado in Alberta
- 1999 – Evacuation and housing of Kosovar refugees
- 1998 – Ice Storms in Eastern Ontario and Québec
- 1997 – Manitoba Floods
- 1996 – Saguenay Floods

The same skills Red Cross applies to major responses are also used to support victims of small-scale disasters. In the past years, the Red Cross has responded to the following:

- Tornadoes
- Flooding
- Chemical spills
- Chemical plant fires
- Evacuations
- Air crashes
- Water bacteria crisis
- House fires
- Forest fires
- Ice storms
- Train derailments
- Terrorist acts

Ontario Communities will Benefit (Program Impact):

A disaster easily levels the playing field. The victims may represent every socioeconomic element of society but when a disaster strikes every person experiences similar circumstances-loss of home, belongings, and even human life. Red Cross Disaster Services, therefore benefits everyone in communities across Ontario.

Response and Recovery:

When personal emergencies and community disasters occur, Red Cross helps people cope. Some of the people who typically receive Red Cross disaster assistance include:

- Residents forced from their homes by flooding, fire, gas leak, explosion or public health concerns
- Residents prevented from reaching their homes due to a natural hazard, such as a snowstorm or flooding
- Residents unable to leave their homes due to weather condition
- Non residents (e.g. travellers) stranded in disaster areas
- Surviving family members of fatally injured victims of a disaster
- Inquirers living outside the affected area who are worried about the health and safety of their family residing in the disaster area
- Governments and other relief partners who need information collected by the Red Cross to support the delivery of additional services to those affected by the disaster

Red Cross disaster services has the following impact on individuals and families assisted:

- Reduced sense of isolation and hopelessness.
- Re-integration into the community with the provision of basic needs.
- Reduction of stress.

Preparedness activities strengthen the capacity of Ontario communities, as it is vital that we plan for emergencies on a household and region-wide basis. When individuals and communities create a culture to expect the unexpected and plan for it, they know what to do in a crisis. When disaster does strike, they are in better control and recover much faster on an individual and community basis. People learn to help themselves, increasing their feelings of competency and control in the midst of unforeseen event. This contributes to the quality of life by reducing personal vulnerability, building feelings of security for individuals and communities.

The communities will gain by having trained local volunteers with the skills and tools to respond to local emergencies. Residents will be better educated about disaster preparedness, which can reduce injury and save lives in the event of a disaster. The benefits will be cumulative and long-term as we create a culture of preparedness.

Past experiences have shown that there is a need for the expertise and abilities offered by the Red Cross Disaster Services volunteers. The Society is an agency providing before, during and after care. Our reputation and performance have made us the agency of choice for emergency preparedness, response and recovery, both in Canada and around the world.

Evaluation Methods:

All Red Cross programs and services undergo an annual review to evaluate their relevance, effectiveness and potential for improvements. It is also determined if programs are consistent with our mission to serve the most vulnerable. Disaster Services measures the number of people helped, the types of emergencies responded to and the type of assistance received. We also assess the quality of service we are providing to vulnerable populations. This is accomplished through data collection as well as client feedback and testimonials. However, due to the variable nature of events in any given year, our measures must go beyond numbers and determine our "state of readiness". This can be determined by measuring factors such as; number of municipal and fire service agreements, number of trained volunteers, availability of response resources, and the success of mock exercises.

The effectiveness of volunteer training and emergency response plans is also tested through mock disaster exercises.

Program Development Opportunities

Personal Disaster Assistance (PDA) Program:

Personal disaster assistance is provided to individuals and families directly affected by a fire or other small-scale emergency. The Red Cross team partners with Fire Departments and other community agencies, to provide essential services at the scene. These include a needs assessment, registration & inquiry, food, shelter, and clothing 24 hours a day for the first 72 hours.

Disaster Service Training:

An important component of the Red Cross Disaster Services program is the availability of fully trained disaster response volunteers. Specialized training teaches volunteers how to respond effectively in a variety of emergency situations, how to manage stress and work with other agencies and volunteers.