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The Regional Municipality of Durham
Information Report

From: Commissioner of Social Services
Report: #2023-INFO-103
Date: December 1, 2023

Subject:

2024 – 2028 Planned Federal Investments for Homelessness: Reaching Home Allocations

Recommendation:

Receive for Information

Report:

1. Purpose

1.1 To provide an update on the Regional Municipality of Durham's (Region) federal funding investment allocations within the Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy Program.

2. Background

2.1 The federal Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy is intended to support the National Housing Strategy and integrate tools and approaches, such as a Coordinated Access System, which are used effectively in Durham to support people in need.

2.2 Reaching Home supports 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 per cent by fiscal year 2027 to 2028.

2.3 Funding is primarily delivered through the Community Entity (CE) model. The Community Entity, normally an incorporated organization (i.e., community's municipal government or an established not-for-profit organization), implements the community plan and is responsible for the selection, approval and management of

projects in the local area. The Region of Durham is the designated Community Entity, or fund administrator for the Reaching Home program, locally.

3. Updated Allocations and Reductions

- 3.1 On November 28, 2023, the Region received notification that the Reaching Home agreement will be extended for four (4) years to cover the period from April 1, 2024, to March 31, 2028.
- 3.2 The incremental funding allocations were noted as follows:

Previously Committed	
2023-2024	\$4,956,923
New Allocations	
2024-2025	\$4,666,872
2025-2026	\$4,666,872
2026-2027	\$940,221
2027-2028	\$940,221

- 3.3 In 2023, funding through the Reaching Home program was allocated to local agencies providing housing stability programs (e.g., housing maintenance support, eviction prevention, etc.), respite beds and supports services, and other emergency shelter operations. All of these funded services have consistently seen increasing pressures and demand for supports.
- 3.4 With the new allocation amounts noted above, the Region (as the Community Entity) will see a **decrease** in funding for homelessness and supporting a Coordinated Access System.
- 3.5 Any incremental reductions to federal investments within this stream will mean reductions to services and supports that are directly impacting our community's most vulnerable residents. The cost of reducing homelessness is increasing as economic conditions continue to negatively impact many residents unproportionally (e.g., average rental costs continue to rise, food bank usage at record high numbers, rates of poverty trending up, affordability out of reach for many, etc.).

4. Federal Response to Reduced Supports

- 4.1 Noted within the communication was an explanation for the allocation amounts stating that although there has been some variation in the way the funding allocations have been determined over the years, the focus remains on two key principles:
- a. Considerations of historical and existing funding levels to minimize service disruptions at the community level; and,

- b. Leverage census population statistics, recognizing comparability across all communities in Canada and that there is a high correlation between population and various community-level homelessness indicators.
- 4.2 Recipient-level allocations for 2024-2028 were determined based on these principles to maintain consistency with previous years while also taking into account population changes in the 2021 Census.

5. Homelessness in Durham

- 5.1 The homelessness crisis is taking a devastating toll on people and communities, undermining a healthy and prosperous Ontario. Homelessness imposes unnecessary costs on our institutions, community agencies, economy, health system and government.
- 5.2 Homelessness is growing in our community. Durham's data shows a 67 per cent increase in people experiencing unsheltered homelessness over the past year. Staff meet regularly with counterparts across the GTHA to coordinate resources, share best practices and approaches to service delivery, and collaborate advocacy efforts for additional funding and policy changes.
- 5.3 Funding announcements from both the Federal and Provincial government is appreciated, but reductions in funding amounts with an increasing population of residents and those experiencing homelessness is going in the wrong direction. A municipally led and partially funded response is not sustainable, given pressures within our current shelter capacity and availability of affordable housing.

6. Relationship to Strategic Plan

- 6.1 This report aligns with/addresses the following strategic goals and priorities in the Durham Region Strategic Plan:
- Goal 2: Community Vitality – To foster an exceptional quality of life with services that contribute to strong neighbourhoods, vibrant and diverse communities, and influence our safety and well-being.
 - Goal 4: Social Investment – To ensure a range of programs, services and supports are available and accessible to those in need, so that no individual is left behind.
 - Goal 5: Service Excellence – To provide exceptional value to Durham taxpayers through responsive, effective, and fiscally sustainable service delivery.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1 Investments in homelessness supports and prevention will continue to place pressure on the municipal tax base, as communities experience unprecedented demands on existing services. Any expansion related activities will require a 'whole

of government' approach where governments, at all levels contribute to solutions to reduce homelessness.

- 7.2 Staff will meet regularly with counterparts across the GTHA to coordinate resources, share best practices and approaches to service delivery, and collaborate advocacy efforts for additional funding and policy changes.

Respectfully submitted,

Original signed by

Stella Danos-Papaconstantinou
Commissioner of Social Services