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The Regional Municipality of Durham Report

To: Health and Social Services Committee
From: Commissioner of Social Services
Report: #2024-SS-1
Date: January 11, 2024

Subject:

Approval to accept One-Time Federal Funding for Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy provided by Infrastructure Canada

Recommendation:

That the Health and Social Services Committee recommends to Regional Council:

- A) That approval be granted to accept one-time Federal funding from Infrastructure Canada in the amount of up to \$1,831,412 for the period of November 1, 2023, to April 30, 2024, be expended in accordance with the Reaching Home guidelines; and
 - B) That the Commissioner of Social Services be authorized to enter into all necessary agreements related to the Reaching Home program in a form satisfactory to the Commissioner of Finance.
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Report:

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide details and seek Regional Municipality of Durham (Region) Council approval to expend one-time federal funding provided through the Infrastructure Canada for the Reaching Home program.

2. Background

- 2.1 On December 22, 2023, Social Services staff received notice from Infrastructure Canada outlining that the Region was receiving a one-time funding increase of \$1,831,412 for the period from November 1, 2023, to April 30, 2024, for the Reaching Home program in recognition that winter weather presents additional risks to people experiencing homelessness in unsheltered areas and outdoors. Eligible investments under this one-time funding program include temporarily expanding shelter spaces, time-limited rental assistance, increasing service

availability (e.g., meals, warming spaces) and purchasing cold weather supplies for those that continue to stay in unsheltered locations.

- 2.2 The submission of the Reaching Home Investment Plan was due back to Infrastructure Canada by January 12, 2024, and has been submitted to the federal government noting final Council approval is anticipated on January 31, 2024.
- 2.3 This one-time funding increase does not impact the extension of the Reaching Home funding from April 1, 2024, to March 31, 2028, outlined in 2023-INFO-103.

3. Reaching Home

- 3.1 Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy is a community-based program aimed at preventing and reducing homelessness across Canada. This program provides funding to urban, Indigenous, rural, and remote communities to help them address their local homelessness needs.
- 3.2 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.
- 3.3 Reaching Home funding includes directives that provide guidance, details and expectations related to the program requirements, including eligible activities and expenses, to assist communities in preventing and reducing homelessness.
- 3.4 This additional funding will allow Service Managers to further invest in providing supports to the most vulnerable Canadians.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 As per section 11.1 of the Region's Budget Management Policy, Unanticipated revenues in excess of \$1,000,000, and the proposed expenditure plan, require approval of the appropriate Standing Committee and Regional Council prior to the expenditure of funding.
- 4.2 The one-time unbudgeted federal funding in the amount of \$1,831,412 will be expended in accordance with the Reaching Home funding guidelines¹.
- 4.3 Funding will be allocated to service providers, subject to terms and conditions set out in the program funding guidelines.

5. Relationship to Strategic Plan

- 5.1 This report aligns with/addresses the following strategic goals and priorities in the Durham Region Strategic Plan:

¹ [Infrastructure Canada - Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy Directives](#)

- a. 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.
- b. 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.
- c. Goal 5: Service Excellence – To provide exceptional value to Durham taxpayers through responsive, effective, and fiscally sustainable service delivery.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 It is recommended that approval be granted for the Regional Municipality of Durham to receive the additional unbudgeted Federal funding from Infrastructure Canada in the amount of \$1,831,412 for the period November 1, 2023, to April 30, 2024, and it be allocated to eligible costs as outlined in the Reaching Home guidelines.
- 6.2 This report was reviewed by the Finance Department and the Commissioner of Finance concurs with the financial recommendations.

Respectfully submitted,

Original Signed By

Stella Danos-Papaconstantinou
Commissioner of Social Services

Recommended for Presentation to Committee

Original Signed By

Elaine C. Baxter-Trahair
Chief Administrative Officer