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The Regional Municipality of Durham Information Report

From: Commissioner of Social Services
Report: #2024-INFO-74
Date: November 22, 2024

Subject:

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

Recommendation:

Receive for information.

Report:

1. Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this report is 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 On December 1, 2023, Regional Council was informed through 2023-INFO-104, that the Region's Reaching Home allocations would be decreasing throughout the period of 2024-2028.

2.2 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.

2.3 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.

2.4 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.

- 2.5 Given the negative impacts to the community from a reduced Reaching Home allocation, the Region advocated to the federal government for the restoration and enhancement of our Reaching Home allocation.
- a. The Chair sent a letter to Minister Fraser on behalf of Regional Council outlining the impacts of a reduced allocation and seeking the restoration and enhancement of the Region's allocation.
 - b. The Chair connected with local MPs on the issue to make them aware of the impacts to residents and ask for their support.
 - c. The Region's federal pre-budget submission requested a reinstatement and enhancement of historical Reaching Home allocations.
 - d. Alignment was sought through sector advocacy on Reaching Home allocations through the Ontario Municipal Social Services Association (OMSSA), the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM).
 - e. Regional Chairs met with Minister Fraser in October 2024 and raised the issue of homelessness supports including the need for an increased Reaching Home base allocation

3. Previous Reports and Decisions

- 3.1 [2023-INFO-103](#): 2024 – 2028 Planned Federal Investments for Homelessness: Reaching Home Allocations

4. Updated Allocations

- 4.1 On November 12, 2024, the Region received notification that our Reaching Home agreement will be increasing with an additional investment from the federal government of \$12,982,522 over the period from 2024-2028.
- 4.2 The incremental funding allocations were noted as follows:

Year	Previous Allocation	Incremental Allocation	Revised Allocation
2024-2025	\$4,666,872	\$1,255,272	\$5,922,144
2025-2026	\$4,666,872	\$1,255,272	\$5,922,144
2026-2027	\$940,221	\$5,235,989	\$6,170,210
2027-2028	\$940,221	\$5,235,989	\$6,170,210

- 4.3 In 2024, funding through the Reaching Home program has been allocated to local agencies providing housing stability programs (e.g., housing maintenance support, eviction prevention, etc.), supports services, and other emergency shelter

operations. All of these funded services have consistently seen increasing pressures and demand for supports.

- 4.4 With the new, increased, allocation amounts noted above, the Region (as the Community Entity) will see an increase in funding for homelessness and supporting a Coordinated Access System.

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.

6. Relationship to Strategic Plan

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

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. Addressing homelessness cannot be done by any one order of government and investments from all levels are needed to reduce homelessness.
- 7.2 Staff will continue to 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