

Municipality Of Chatham-Kent
Community Human Services
Employment and Social Services

To: Mayor and Members of Council
From: Josh Myers, Program Manager, Employment and Social Services
Date: May 31, 2021
Subject: Sole Source Agreement - CK Housing First Intensive Case Management for Chronic and Episodic Homelessness

Recommendation

It is recommended that:

1. The Director of Employment and Social Services be authorized to enter into a 12 month sole source agreement with Canadian Mental Health Association, Lambton-Kent Branch to continue delivering the Housing First Supportive Housing program, with the possibility to renew for two additional one-year terms, at an annual cost of \$198,272. This program is fully funded by the provincial Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative.

Background

The Procurement By-law #166-2020 was adopted by Council on December 14, 2020 and Sole Source is defined as The Purchase of Deliverables where there is only one supplier that provides the Product.

Section 125 – Sole Source states the following:

A direct Award of Contract may be used to purchase Deliverables from Municipal funds if there is only one Supplier that provides the product. Sole Source purchases that meet this criteria must have prior approval authorized by:

- a. The Chief Administrative Officer up to \$100,000;
- b. Council above \$100,000.

As per the Procurement By-law, the director of Employment and Social Services is seeking authorization to enter into a second Service Agreement with Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) Lambton-Kent Branch to continue delivering the Housing First Supportive Housing program.

CMHA Lambton-Kent first entered into a service contract with the Municipality of Chatham-Kent to deliver a Housing First Supportive housing program in 2017.

This Service Provider was selected through a competitive process to provide services as described in RFP# R16-268. CMHA were the only applicants of RFP R16-268. In 2019 Chatham-Kent put forward RFP#R19-344 Transitional Supportive Housing Services. This RFP sought proponents to deliver supportive housing case management services and received no proponent bids.

CMHA Lambton-Kent has been a Housing First Champion since 2013 delivering a variety of housing programming in both Chatham-Kent and Lambton County. As part of an integrated health and addictions system in the Chatham-Kent community, CMHA has demonstrated their ability to leverage wrap around supports to improve outcomes for clients participating in this program.

Housing First Supportive Housing Program

Supportive housing refers to a combination of housing assistance (e.g. rent-geared-to-income, rent supplements) and support services (e.g. counselling, life skills training, activities of daily living) to enable people to live as independently as possible in a community setting.

In 2017 CMHA Lambton-Kent began delivering the Housing First Supportive Housing Program in partnership with the Municipality. This program was created to address the growing needs of high acuity, chronically homeless individuals.

The program provides 22 Supportive Housing spaces to those most in need in the community. Each individual receives housing in the private market, financial assistance to afford the unit, and high frequency case management supports to maintain their housing and connect them with other appropriate services. Referrals are received through Chatham-Kent's coordinated access program "CK CARES" to ensure that those in most need are prioritized versus a first come first serve approach.

To date this program boasts strong outcomes and is a part of Chatham-Kent's plan to end chronic homelessness in the community. Some of these outcomes are:

- 100% of active participants are still housed 18 months after moving into their own place.
- Despite the tight rental market, on average, it takes 49 days to move a participant into their place.
- Participants averaged 144 nights homeless in the six months prior to entering the program.
- At entry to the program, 59% of participants were assessed as high acuity, indicating a need for intense supports to maintain housing, and no participants were assessed as low acuity, indicating a need for minimal supports to stay housed.

- Conversely, at 18 months, only 16% were assessed as high acuity and 26% as low acuity.
- After just six months of being housed, the average use of expensive public services* was cut by more than half, from an average of 13 interactions to an average of six interactions. After 18 months of being housed, this was further decreased to an average of four interactions per participant.

*Emergency room visits, ambulance rides, hospital stays, police interactions and incarcerations.

Further, the local statistics are supported by decades of research on effective housing-focused case management practices to end homelessness. The Case Management for Ending Homelessness Standards of Practice summarized the two strongest indicators of case management success as:

1. The ability to be flexible to the client's needs.
2. The quality of relationship between the client and the case manager (Calgary Homeless Foundation, p.122, 2011). Having a consistent and trusted relationship with at least one source of support is an essential component to helping individuals navigate their journey towards housing stability, a journey that can take as much as three years for some individuals. In fact of the core competencies of a housing focused case manager is the ability to successfully engage with people experiencing homelessness and develop trusting relationships.

Comments

Chatham-Kent, like many communities across the country, is experiencing increasing levels of homelessness. Emergency housing programming alone will not end homelessness. Supportive housing continues to be an evidence-based, successful way to achieve housing stability for people experiencing episodic and chronic homelessness.

Continued investment in supportive housing will assist the Municipality in meeting the following targets in the Chatham-Kent Housing and Homelessness Plan 2020-2024:

- 25% of new housing units will be affordable
- By 2024, 60 new non-profit, co-op or affordable rental housing units will be created
- By 2024, more vulnerable people will be linked to appropriate supports to maintain housing
- By 2024, partnerships will established with the healthcare sector to provide additional supportive housing

Sole source approval is requested as there are no other agencies in Chatham-Kent that have the capacity or experience to deliver a program of this nature. CMHA Lambton-Kent continues to provide excellent service within the expectations of the contract and it

is recommended to continue to avoid unnecessary service interruptions for the people that depend on this program.

Areas of Strategic Focus and Critical Success Factors

The recommendation in this report supports the following areas of strategic focus:

Economic Prosperity:

Chatham-Kent is an innovative and thriving community with a diversified economy

A Healthy and Safe Community:

Chatham-Kent is a healthy and safe community with sustainable population growth

People and Culture:

Chatham-Kent is recognized as a culturally vibrant, dynamic, and creative community

Environmental Sustainability:

Chatham-Kent is a community that is environmentally sustainable and promotes stewardship of our natural resources

The recommendation in this report supports the following critical success factors:

Financial Sustainability:

The Corporation of the Municipality of Chatham-Kent is financially sustainable

Open, Transparent and Effective Governance:

The Corporation of the Municipality of Chatham-Kent is open, transparent and effectively governed with efficient and bold, visionary leadership

Has the potential to support all areas of strategic focus & critical success factors

Neutral issues (does not support negatively or positively)

Consultation

The Purchasing Officer was consulted on the preparation of this report.

Financial Implications

This program is 100% provincially funded under the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative. Annual costs are \$198,272 for program and administration funding. This amount has not changed since the program was first created.

The Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative is currently being reviewed and it is not known what funding allocation can be expected for 2022. As such, it is recommended that at this time the Division enter into a one year contract until the Province provides an update on future funding.

Prepared by:

Reviewed by:

Josh Myers
Program Manager

Polly Smith, BA, Dipl. M.M.
Director

Reviewed by:

April Rietdyk, RN, BScN, MHS, PHD PUBH
General Manager
Community Human Services

Consulted and confirmed the content of the consultation section of the report by:

Jennifer Scherle
Purchasing Officer
Financial Services

Attachment: None

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