

Highlights: Human Needs Task Force Update - March 31, 2020

Support For the Community:

- **Food Security**

- **Happening now:** Community partners are delivering food hampers, hot meals and groceries to seniors and at-risk residents throughout the city, including in the rural areas. Anyone who needs food can call 211.
- **Next Steps:** The City is assessing food security needs in anticipation of future funding.

- **Outreach to Isolated and Vulnerable Residents**

- **Happening now:** Seniors and at-risk residents are receiving wellness phone calls, including the 1,451 residents on the OCH emergency contact list. Options Bytown, Salus and Aging in Place are also calling their tenants for wellness checks.
- **Next Steps:** The City and community partners will be starting door-to-door wellness checks very soon, starting in West Carleton. The City is joining community partners on a one-stop, bilingual information portal that will support access to grocery and pharmacy delivery, transportation to essential medical appointments, telephone safety checks and Meals on Wheels for isolated seniors, persons with disabilities and other vulnerable residents. The Task Force is looking to find solutions to support those neighbours facing the most barriers – those with no phone, no computer, no internet, limited connectivity and/or peer supports.

- **Urgent Transportation**

- **Happening now:** The Champlain Community Support Network agencies are providing transportation to medical appointments and grocery and food pickup for those with financial, transportation, health or mobility challenges.

- **Shelter and Homelessness Support**

- **Happening now:** Housing Services, Ottawa Inner City Health, local hospitals, shelter providers, housing support services and Ottawa Public Health are working together to ensure suspected COVID-19 cases within the shelter system are quickly assessed, isolated and supported.
 - **Singles:** The City is working with single shelter providers to identify space suitable to reduce the overcrowding in the shelter system and to move those most at risk. The City opened the Routier Community Centre as an Isolation Centre on Monday, March 23 to provide space and on-site services for homeless, single men and women who need to self-isolate.
 - **Families:** To promote physical distancing in the City's family shelter system, the City is finding new hotel spaces with kitchen and laundry facilities for families, with 53 additional hotel rooms secured to date. There have been no confirmed cases of COVID-19 in our family shelter or off-site services (hotels and motels), and staff have identified places where families can isolate, should the need arise. There are two alternate spaces for this purpose available immediately and a third alternate space will be available in two weeks.
 - **Youth:** The Youth Services Bureau is working with the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario to set-up isolation space for youth between the ages of 16 and 18.

- **Next Steps:** The City is monitoring the situation at the Routier Community Centre while planning for additional self isolation capacity requirements. The City has secured 29 units with uOttawa that will be operational in the coming week as isolation space for families. Housing Services is waiting for confirmation from the province on an increased, one-time allocation under the Community Homelessness Prevention Program (CHPI) to support, in part, households at risk of, or experiencing homelessness, as a result of COVID-19.
- **COVID-19 Related Income Supports and Impact on Rent-Geared-to-Income (RGI)/Social Housing**
 - **Happening now:** There are a number of financial support programs for low-income people and those on social assistance listed in the memo. The changes to Ontario Works have already been implemented, including expanded discretionary benefits to deal with the effects of COVID-19. There are new protections for RGI tenants during COVID-19, and staff are working with housing providers to be sure the protections are understood and implemented.

Support For Community Partners:

- The City of Ottawa, United Way and Community Foundation of Ottawa are aligning funding envelopes to coordinate funding to non-profit organizations, where it is needed most and jointly funding Volunteer Ottawa as a one-stop shop for volunteer recruitment, training and placement, to enable a focused approach to addressing the priority need for volunteers in key agencies and across the community.
- The City will work closely with the United Way to support allocation of the recently announced federal funding to assist seniors through this crisis.
- The City has advised the agencies that receive community funding that we will continue to provide funds for the balance of the year to help address the drastic reductions in both donations and volunteers, as well as:
 - Dedicating the 2020 budget envelope (\$299,000) of unallocated funds set aside to address extraordinary, unexpected contingencies that may arise to support non-profit agencies to respond to critical needs during the COVID-19 situation, address unforeseen emergencies and maintain essential operations where possible;
 - Putting the One-Time Non-Renewable Community Project Fund Allocation Process on hold. Decisions will be made about Project Funding when the crisis resolves or when more information is available about emerging needs and the impact of the crisis on the community sector; and
 - Postponing the new Community Funding Framework implementation until January 2022. No changes to existing funding with community agencies will occur in 2021. Staff will present a revised timeline to Council in the coming months.
- The federal government announced \$1.65 million in new funding through the Reaching Home program to help Ottawa's homelessness sector cover pandemic-related expenses. The City has worked with agencies in the housing and homelessness sector to identify and prioritize their most critical needs and allocated the \$1.65 million to 50 agencies to cover extraordinary expenses related to COVID-19 over the next six to eight weeks, including funding for additional staffing, cleaning supplies, food, transportation and IT equipment. Housing and homelessness agencies have been notified of their allocation and should receive their funding by Friday, April 3.

- The federal government announced additional funding of \$157.5 million under the Reaching Home program to support people experiencing homelessness during the COVID-19 outbreak. The City has been notified that our 2020-2021 funding allocation will be \$4.8 million under Canada's COVID-19 Economic Response Plan to Support People Experiencing and At Risk of Homelessness to complement the \$1.65 million received through Reaching Home for 2019-2020.