



Committee Report

To:	Warden McQueen and Members of Grey County Council
Committee Date:	September 10, 2020
Subject / Report No:	HDR-CW-08-20
Title:	Social Services Relief Fund Phase 2
Prepared by:	Anne Marie Shaw, Director of Housing
Reviewed by:	Kim Wingrove, CAO
Lower Tier(s) Affected:	All
Status:	

Recommendation

- 1. That report HDR-CW-08-20 regarding an update on the Social Services Relief Funds (SSRF) and the addition of SSRF Phase 2 funding be received;**
- 2. And That council endorse the planned projects with the SSRF Phase 2 funding;**
- 3. That staff be authorized to proceed prior to County Council approval as per section 25.6 (b) of Procedural By-law 5003-18.**

Executive Summary

The County of Grey received Social Services Relief Funding (SSRF) through the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI) to assist community agencies that support people experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness with COVID 19 related expenses. The funds are to provide supports through the pandemic and into the recovery phase. The funds have been greatly needed by community agencies to provide safe and consistent services for our vulnerable residents. The Province released SSRF Phase 2 funding to provide a rental arrears program and capital funding to assist with gaps in services.

Background and Discussion

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, a provincial \$200 million Social Services Relief Fund (SSRF) to help protect the health and safety of the province's most vulnerable people was released. Funds should be directed at supporting people in community housing, supportive housing, people with low incomes and those experiencing homelessness.

Grey County received a total allocation of \$2,312,900 for 2020-2021 out of the \$148 million allocated to service managers. Fifty percent of the funding (\$1,156,450) was received in April, 25% (\$578,225) in July and the remaining 25% (\$578,225) will be received in September.

Funding received to date is \$1,734,675. There are currently \$46,836 remaining in funds until September 2020.

The County continues to receive requests for funding.

Funding Allocated to August 31, 2020

Recipient / Category	Expensed	Committed
Protective Equipment and Supplies	45,011	
Cleaning services	33,666	
Emergency Accommodations Y Housing	217,616	
YMCA Housing Support Program	75,000	
United Way	180,500	
SOAHAC (Southwest Ontario Aboriginal Health Access Centre)	22,000	
M'Wikwedong Indigenous Friendship Center	17,300	
OSHaRE (Owen Sound Hunger and Relief Effort)	106,176	
Housing with Related Supports Providers	135,050	90,000
Flesherton Food Bank	18,000	
South East Grey Community Services & Food Program	12,000	
211 Community Connections	10,000	
Canadian Mental Health Association Grey Bruce	100,000	
Safe n Sound Grey Bruce	49,520	
St Anglican Church (Town of The Blue Mountains) Food Programs	20,000	
Meaford Meal Program (Chef Hache)	20,000	
Reception Centre – Owen Sound CMHA	50,000-	
Isolation Centre – Sydenham Campus	-	150,000
Non-Profit Housing Providers	100,000	
Community Living Rental Assistance Program	36,000	
Rent Benefit	-	100,000
Future Costs/To Be Determined	-	
Subtotal	\$1,247,839	\$440,000
Total	\$1,687,839	

Social Services Relief Fund Initiatives to Date

OSHaRE

OSHaRE served 32,219 meals between March and July of 2020 compared to 8,705 meals between March and July of 2019. The County provided \$50,000 to assist with the cost of food, \$12,400 towards the cost of new freezers and \$45,000 for modifications to the site so take-out meals can be provided in the colder months. Currently residents line up outside for take-out meals. OSHaRE expects the number of residents using the program to increase during the winter months. Funds will be set aside for the September allotment of SSRF to assist with food costs through the fall and winter months.

Bruce Grey United Way

Weekly meetings are being held with Public Health, Grey and Bruce Counties, Poverty Task Force and agencies that provide services to vulnerable populations. Several issues and gaps in service have been identified at these meetings. Once a gap is identified a plan is put in place to provide relief or services. Grey County has provided \$180,500 in funding and the United Way has taken on several initiatives for the community. As an example, working with Habitat for Humanity to deliver meals to those in emergency housing isolating or “staying at home”. **2548 meals** were delivered between April and August 2020. Funds were given to provide financial literacy to people struggling with making ends meet. Supporting frozen meals being provided through South East Grey Community Services, face masks for back-pack program, face masks for food security groups and other similar initiatives.

Housing with Related Supports

The County funds five Housing with Related Supports Providers. The County provides funds for PPE and enhanced cleaning to all five providers. As this is congregate living there are funds to assist with providing minor renovations to enhance social distancing and safe practices where space is possible. The County is funding additional washrooms and an outdoor visiting area for two of the providers. \$90,000 has been allocated to these projects.

Emergency Housing

Y Housing provides emergency housing throughout Grey County. Y Housing reports a significant increase in nights of emergency stays. 238 nights in March 2020 compared to 452 nights in July 2020. July 2019 saw 93 nights of emergency housing.

Grey County funded \$113,000 for emergency housing from April to July 2020 versus \$32,000 for the same period in 2019. The County has forwarded funds for a new staff person for up to two years to assist with the increase in need, increase in people experiencing homelessness and the increase in the time it takes to find affordable housing.

Y Housing continues to secure motel and hotel rooms around Grey County for those that may need to isolate and cannot due to congregate living arrangements or are experiencing homelessness.

Reception Centre Canadian Mental Health Association

A reception centre in Owen Sound has opened as a collaboration between the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), Safe n Sound, and Grey County. The centre provides screening, information on COVID 19, and staff to answer questions and provide information and a chance to make referrals for services. Services include food, emergency housing, mental health services, funding, and other related services. Grey County is providing \$150,000 in funding for a full-time staff person for Mental Health Outreach Services, rent supplements and costs for the centre for a year.

Waitlist for transitional housing grown by 75% compared to March 2020, waitlist for outreach supports grown 625% since March 2020 at CMHA.

Isolation Centre

An isolation centre is set up at the Sydenham Campus. The site can accommodate up to 15 people for isolation. The site will be used for people that do not need medical treatment but have been told to isolate and have nowhere to isolate. It is also available in the event a supportive housing provider needs to relocate residents. \$150,000 is committed to provide staffing and meals if required for a second wave.

Other Expenses

The SSRF provided funds for Non-Profit housing providers and Grey County Housing for PPE, enhanced cleaning protocols and workplace safety protocols. Funds continue to be provided to various Community agencies that work with people experiencing homelessness or social services supports through Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

SSRF Phase 2 Funds

Recognizing the housing and homelessness sector has had to alter the ways in which services are provided to vulnerable populations in the COVID-19 outbreak, the Province has released additional funds through the Social Services Relief Fund. Phase 2 funding builds on the support currently being delivered and is to be used:

- to mitigate risk for vulnerable people in congregate care settings,
- to encourage longer term housing solutions
- to enhance rent assistance to households with rent arrears due to COVID-19

The Province has provided a conditional allotment of \$793,347 to Grey County in a letter from the Minister dated August 12, 2020. For Grey County to access these funds a business case must be provided to the Province. Based on the business case the Province will decide if the funds are approved for use. The business case is due September 11, 2020.

Challenges Exacerbated by COVID-19

Since the COVID-19 pandemic began several already concerning challenges have been exacerbated by COVID-19:

- Securing long term housing after emergency housing. There is a lack of Transitional housing in Grey County. The only transitional housing is for Victims of Domestic Violence families.
- Staffing to keep up with community demand for emergency housing and supports
- Staffing for gaps in service exacerbated by COVID19 such as food security, mental health and addictions supports, outreach services.
- Meeting funding requirements for rental arrears after CERB ends
- Preparing for a surge in emergency housing needs during the long winter season in Grey County.
- The inability to move people from emergency housing to transitional housing to long term housing when needed due to lack of transitional housing in Grey County.

Through the SSRF Phase 1 the County was able to provide staffing to mental health and emergency housing agencies to assist with rapidly rising case loads. The missing link continues to be transitional housing options.

Housing Solutions Using Phase 2 SSRF

Through SSRF Phase 2 a capital component has been added to look at longer term housing solutions. Grey County has 3 providers that with funding can provide much needed transitional housing options. Plans for the additional Phase 2 SSRF funds will be to renovate existing buildings to provide much needed transitional housing.

Homelessness System Currently

- Emergency housing Provider (Y Housing)
- Motels rooms secured for emergency stays
- By Name List Coordinator program through CMHA
- Takes referrals from coordinated entry points (hospital, CMHA, agencies, shelters, indigenous agencies)
- **No transitional housing**
- Supports available through CMHA for transitional housing
- Council approved priority for community housing if participating in BLN program
- Move through the system of homeless to transitional to permanent housing

Social Services Relief Fund Phase 2 Funding plan		
Organization	Project	Funds (\$)
Maam Wiim Wiin	3 Indigenous Transitional Units	120,000
Women's Centre GB	2 transitional units (VAW)	120,000
Lutheran Social Services	4 transitional units	355,000
Rental Arrears Program		174,547
Administration (3%)		23,800
Total		\$793,347

Maam Wiim Win

Maam Wiim Win has partnered with M'Wikwedong Native Cultural Centre and CMHA to provide 3 units of transitional housing with culturally appropriate supports. It is a well-known fact that Indigenous communities are significantly over-represented among the homeless and vulnerable populations. Many face multiple adversities and are more likely to face difficulties finding a place to call home compared to Non-Indigenous people.

In 2019, M'Wikwedong obtained funding through the Ontario Aboriginal Housing Program for Outreach Workers. Maam Wiim Win Non-Profit plans to support individuals by transforming one of its houses into 3 individual units, which would include housing individuals who are being supported by the Outreach program.

Women's Centre Grey Bruce

Women's Centre Grey Bruce provides emergency shelter and second stage housing for women experiencing domestic violence. Currently second stage has 10 RGI family townhome units for

women and their children. Women's Centre is proposing to convert one of the townhomes into two one- bedroom self-contained units for single women experiencing violence. Supports and outreach to obtain permanent housing would be provided in house. Grey County would be providing the extra RGI funding.

Lutheran Social Services Owen Sound

Lutheran Social Services is currently a non-profit housing provider funded by Grey County. Lutheran SS has a 78-unit apartment building, recently built a life lease apartment building and owns a few private market apartments. Lutheran SS owns a building that can be converted into 4 self-contained apartments of transitional housing. The building is zoned residential. The units would be used as part of the By Names List Rapid Housing program through CMHA. The program consists of community partners such as Grey Bruce Health, CMHA, Y Housing, Grey and Bruce Counties. CMHA would provide the supports and the rent supplements for the transitional housing.

Rental Arrears Program

A rent benefit will be set up to support those that have lost income due to COVID 19 and are market rent tenants or affordable housing tenants and make under the Household Income Limits set by the Province for Grey County. This fund will prevent evictions since landlords can now proceed to the Landlord Tribunal for eviction as of July 31, 2020. We are expecting a spike in requests with the discontinuation of CERB.

Legal and Legislated Requirements

The County of Grey as the Service Manager provides leadership to local homelessness prevention community planning and funds numerous related programs and services.

Transitional Housing is part of Grey County's 10 Year Housing and Homelessness Plan

Financial and Resource Implications

The Social Services Relief Fund is 100% Provincially funded.

Relevant Consultation

- Internal: Housing staff
- External: Maam Wiim Win, M'Wikwedong Indigenous Friendship Centre, Canadian Mental Health Association Grey Bruce, Women's Centre Grey Bruce, Lutheran Social Services Owen Sound, Y Housing and Grey Bruce Health Services

Appendices and Attachments

[SSRF Phase 2 Funding Letter](#)