



# Committee Report

<b>To:</b>	Warden Hicks and Members of Grey County Council
<b>Committee Date:</b>	February 25, 2021
<b>Subject / Report No:</b>	HDR-CW-04-21
<b>Title:</b>	Social Services Relief Fund and COVID Related Housing Initiatives
<b>Prepared by:</b>	Anne Marie Shaw, Director of Housing
<b>Reviewed by:</b>	Kim Wingrove, CAO
<b>Lower Tier(s) Affected:</b>	All
<b>Status:</b>	Recommendation adopted by Committee as presented per Resolution CW48-21;

## Recommendation

1. That report HDR-CW-04-21 regarding an update on the Social Services Relief Funds and COVID 19 related housing initiatives be received for information.

## 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.

## Background and Discussion

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 was received in April, 25% in July and the remaining 25% in September. Grey County also received Social Services Relief Funding Phase 2 in the amount of \$1,227,247 which allows for capital costs including renovation of buildings to create additional rental spaces.

Service Managers determine local need and distribute the funding to ensure agencies and people are receiving the supports they need. The funds could be used for initiatives such as:

- Emergency Housing
- Use of motels and hotels
- Transportation Costs
- Isolation Centres
- Food and supplies
- Enhanced cleaning services
- Non-medical staffing
- Protective Equipment

Funds should be directed at supporting people in community housing, supportive housing, people with low incomes and those experiencing homelessness.

At this time, we have fully allocated or committed the Social Services Relief Fund to meet local needs as detailed below:

### SSRF Funding Allocation Phase 1 – To Date

<b>SSRF Phase 1 Funding Summary</b>		
<b>Organization/Program</b>	<b>Expensed</b>	<b>Committed</b>
<b>United Way</b>	\$ 228,725	
<b>Indigenous Housing Initiatives</b>	\$ 39,300	
<b>Housing With Supports</b>	\$ 114,550	
<b>Emergency Shelter</b>	\$ 432,293	\$ 100,000
<b>YMCA Community Initiatives</b>	\$ 215,000	\$ 115,000
<b>Canadian Mental Health Association</b>	\$ 155,313	
<b>Safe N Sound</b>	\$ 85,720	\$ 70,000
<b>Community Connections 211</b>	\$ 10,000	\$ 15,000
<b>Non-profit housing</b>	\$ 100,000	\$ 62,000
<b>Oshare</b>	\$ 142,676	
<b>Meaford &amp; Thornbury Community Meal(s)</b>	\$ 76,500	
<b>Community Living</b>	\$ 56,000	
<b>Flesherton Food Bank and SEGCH Meal Program</b>	\$ 34,820	
<b>Small Organization Funding</b>	\$ 77,538	\$ 54,939
<b>Rent and Utility Arrears Program</b>	\$ 18,531	
<b>Grey County Cleaning, PPE, Minor Modifications</b>	\$ 108,996	
<b>Subtotal</b>	\$ 1,895,961	\$ 416,939
<b>Total</b>		\$ <b>2,312,900</b>

### *Social Services Relief Fund Initiatives to Date*

Since the advent of the current pandemic, County staff has been in close contact with funded service providers across the local homeless prevention system, with the intent to proactively offer resources and supports, and to stay ahead of emerging needs.

Phase one funding has allowed community agencies to meet the new challenges COVID 19 has brought to our communities.

- Need for PPE, extra cleaning, signage
- Physical changes to buildings, offices and congregate living centres. Extra staffing due to increase in number of clients accessing services
- Increase in residents accessing food programs across the County
- Increase in the number and length of emergency short term housing
- Increase in the cost of emergency short term housing
- Housing with related supports increase in number of residents coming from hospital
- Addition of 3 outreach workers through Y Housing and Canadian Mental Health Association

- Gaps in service filled by multiple agencies, food delivery to people accessing emergency housing and people in isolation.
- Evening hours for access to supports and emergency housing

## Isolation Centre

An isolation centre is available 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.

## Rent Benefit

A rent benefit will be set up to support those that have lost income due to COVID 19 and are market rent tenants in affordable housing or and make under the Household Income Limits set by the Province for Grey County. It will be a one-time use fund.

## Social Serviced Relief Fund Phase 2

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.

<b>SSRF Phase 2 Funding Summary</b>		
<b>Organization/Program</b>	<b>Expensed</b>	<b>Committed</b>
<b>Women's Centre</b>	\$ -	\$ 240,000
<b>Maam Wiim Win Housing</b>	\$ -	\$ 120,000
<b>Lutheran Social Services Owen Sound</b>	\$ -	\$ 355,000
<b>Rent and Utility Arrears Program</b>	\$ 38,791	\$ 135,756
<b>Emergency Housing</b>	\$ -	\$ 100,000
<b>Housing Outreach Support</b>	\$ -	\$ 200,883
<b>Housing with Related Supports</b>		\$ 36,817
<b>Subtotal</b>	\$ 38,791	\$ 1,188,456
<b>Total</b>		\$ 1,227,247

## COVID 19 Housing Initiatives

<b>Area of Need</b>	<b>Actions</b>
<b>Community and Non-Profit Housing</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Enhanced cleaning seven days a week of public high touch areas in Grey County Housing Buildings. Information posted in buildings for social distancing, self-isolation, procedures for safely doing laundry. Common room areas closed to deter social gathering</li> <li>2. Phone reach out to residents of Grey County Housing to provide information, referrals to services and general well-being of tenants</li> </ol>

Area of Need	Actions
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Implement a short-term rent benefit program for market rent households living in community housing (non-profit) who have lost employment income as a result of COVID-19 starting in May <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand to residents making under the Household Income Limits as set by the Province</li> </ul> </li> <li>4. Implement the Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit program on April 2, 2020 to assist households on the County's subsidized housing wait list living in private rental housing with a rent benefit. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will provide a subsidy to approximately 30 households on the Grey County waitlist.</li> <li>• The Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit is intended to help bridge the gap between the rent a household can afford to pay and the market rent of their unit</li> </ul> </li> <li>5. Postpone evictions in Grey County Housing properties, except for those associated with criminal activity or serious safety issues, and encourage other community housing providers to do the same <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with tenants having difficulty with rental payments due to COVID 19 by offering payment plans</li> </ul> </li> <li>6. Monitor to determine if additional funding will be needed for the Sustainable Housing Benefit</li> <li>7. Communications and meetings with Non-Profit Housing Providers to ensure providers are supported with education, information and funding</li> </ol>
<b>Services for People Experiencing Homelessness</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8. Increased funding through Social Services Relief Fund for emergency housing. Rooms secured at motels and hotels throughout Grey County</li> <li>9. Funding for three Outreach Workers due to increase in residents access emergency short term shelter.</li> <li>10. Establish a Self-Isolation Centre for people who are experiencing homelessness and need a place to live when they are confirmed to have COVID-19 or pending results of their COVID-19 test. Centre could be used as a relocation centre for supportive housing, if required</li> <li>11. Funding to Safe n Sound to provide after-hours/evening services</li> <li>12. Funding to local groups throughout Grey County providing food and meals due to increased need</li> <li>13. Funding to 211 Community Connections for staffing due to large increase in volume of calls. Receive weekly reports of unmet needs and find solutions to housing and homelessness related gaps.</li> <li>14. Funds to local indigenous outreach services due to increase in need</li> </ol>

Area of Need	Actions
	<p><b>15.</b> Assist Housing with Related Supports Providers with additional costs. Provide funds for subsidized beds due to increased numbers coming from hospitals.</p> <p><b>16.</b> Funding for three proponents to renovate existing buildings into transitional/supportive housing</p>

## Concerns for 2021

Funds from SSRF have been integral in providing emergency supports such as food, shelter and other basic needs for our most vulnerable residents. These funds end March 31, 2021. Funds have been extended to agencies to provide services past April 1st but the effects of the pandemic will be long term. Two areas of concern are our housing with related supports providers and the emergency short term housing program. Both programs are seeing an increase in usage compared to past years. The emergency short term housing program is experiencing about a 25% increase in usage, stays are longer and nightly rates have increased. The current Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative Funds will not cover the extra demand for service. The increased funding needs have been communicated to the Province.

## 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.

## Financial and Resource Implications

The Social Services Relief Fund is 100% Provincially funded.

## Relevant Consultation

- Internal: Housing and Finance staff
- External: Various community agencies

## Appendices and Attachments

None