



# 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-05-21
<b>Title:</b>	Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative Investment Plan 2021-22
<b>Prepared by:</b>	Josh Gibson
<b>Reviewed by:</b>	Anne Marie Shaw
<b>Lower Tier(s) Affected:</b>	County-wide initiative
<b>Status:</b>	Recommendation adopted by Committee as presented per Resolution CW49-21;

## Recommendation

1. That Report HDR-CW-05-21 regarding a proposed Investment Plan for Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative for 2021-22 be received; and
2. That Grey County Council endorses the Investment Plan for the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative and approves the 2021-22 funding to be expensed by March 31, 2022.

## Executive Summary

The County receives funds from the Province through the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI) to deliver local homelessness and homelessness prevention programs. This report provides details on the programs and services for 2021-22.

## Background and Discussion

The Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI) aims to support households experiencing or at risk of homelessness by improving access to adequate, suitable, and affordable housing. Under CHPI, Service Managers have the flexibility to use funding to meet local needs and priorities within the guidelines set by the Province.

To meet local needs the following programs are planned over the next year.

### *Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative 2021-2022*

<b>Program</b>	<b>Annual Funding</b>
<b>Housing with Related Supports</b>	<b>680,000</b>
<b>Sustainable Housing Benefit</b>	<b>400,000</b>
<b>Community Relations Worker</b>	<b>87,000</b>
<b>Y Homeless Prevention Program</b>	<b>211,514</b>
<b>Emergency Housing Program</b>	<b>150,000</b>
<b>Homelessness Response Table</b>	<b>35,000</b>
<b>Community Enhancement Program</b>	<b>85,959</b>
<b>Safe N Sound – The Space</b>	<b>50,000</b>
<b>Administration</b>	<b>188,830</b>
<b>Total CHPI Funding</b>	<b>1,888,303</b>

## Housing with Related Supports

Grey County funds five housing with related supports providers; Ayton Residential Lodge, Kent Residential Homes, Inglewood Villa, Meaford Place, and Second Avenue Lodge. This housing provides services such as medication management, laundry services and meals. These supportive housing providers house an average of 70 residents of Grey County per month or over 25,000 nights of accommodation per year.

## Sustainable Housing Benefit

The Sustainable Housing Benefit (SHB) provides financial aid to individuals and households at risk of homelessness or currently experiencing homelessness to find or maintain housing. SHB provided financial assistance in the amount of \$300,405 to 582 households in 2020. Assistance provided is largely last month's rent, utility arrears and rental arrears.

In 2019, SHB provided \$481,467 to 907 Grey County households this represents the largest year over year drop in program funding requests. This decrease in program uptake during the pandemic was due to a variety of reasons including additional income support measures such as CERB and utility cost reductions; in addition, funding provided through the Social Services Relief Fund offset some related needs. It is anticipated this program will trend back towards normal levels in the coming fiscal year.

<b>SHB Funding Provided in 2020</b>		
<b>Expense Type</b>	<b>Households Assisted</b>	<b>Amount Issued (\$)</b>
Beds/Appliances	31	8,685

Utility Costs	88	41,722
Last Month's Rent	303	173,838
Pest Control/Maintenance	25	8,266
Moving Expenses	25	4,426
Rental Arrears	110	63,468
<b>Total</b>	<b>582</b>	<b>\$300,405</b>

## Grey County Housing Community Relations Worker

Grey County Housing is investing in a second Community Relations Worker to assist tenants in maintaining their housing, providing supports, and making referrals to community agencies. The Outreach Worker will build more partnership opportunities with our community partners. Grey County Housing is seeing a significant increase in the number of tenants that require supports such as aging in place and mental health supports to remain housed.

## Y Homelessness Prevention Program and Emergency Housing

Since 2008 Grey County and the YMCA Community Initiative have had a very successful partnership with the YMCA operating the Emergency short-term housing program for Grey County as well as providing Housing Stability Workers to assist people experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

Their services include helping households get connected to resources including financial assistance programs, finding vacancies, connecting with landlords, as well as educating tenants and landlords about their rights and responsibilities.

The emergency housing program involves providing suitable short-term lodgings for individuals or families experiencing homelessness. A 24-hour service is available in cold winter months in partnership with 211. This service provided emergency accommodation for 5,070 nights of accommodations to over 750 households.

## Safe N Sound – The Space and Evening Drop In

Safe N Sound is a non-profit organization operating The Space on 8<sup>th</sup> Street East in Owen Sound. The Space offer individuals' access to basic needs, support, advocacy, and referrals.

This year as a response to increased need and the lack of warming centers as buildings closed their doors to stop the spread of Covid-19, we were able to provide some additional funding to expand the hours of operation for the Space. These additional operating hours in the evenings allow unsheltered individuals to get out of the cold as well as access supports and referral services including the Grey Bruce Emergency Short Term housing program operated through the YMCA.

## Homelessness Response Table

Grey and Bruce Counties are providing joint funding through the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative for a Housing Systems Navigator with Canadian Mental Health Association

Grey Bruce. The Housing Systems Navigator will be the lead coordinator for the formation of a By-Name List of prioritized chronically homeless individuals or households.

Alongside the by-names list a Housing Response Table coordinated by the Housing Systems Navigator and made up of Housing and support agencies across Grey and Bruce Counties will work to pair individuals from the by-names list with housing vacancies. These vacancy matches will also provide supports to the individuals by way of a transitional housing model.

The by-names list and Housing Response Table will identify people having repeated episodes of homelessness and work with community partners to provide wrap around services. A pilot project using transitional units from our existing stock to provide housing with supports to people experiencing chronic homelessness is an integral piece of this new initiative.

## Community Enhancement Program

CHPI funds support local nonprofit initiatives to provide services for those at risk of homelessness or experiencing homelessness through the Community Enhancement Funds. Grey County has a large geographic area and accessing programs which are offered only in centralized areas is sometimes difficult for individuals. Often these individuals rely on local organizations such as churches, non-profits and volunteer groups. Local initiatives supply meals, transportation, good food boxes, heating funds, furnishings and other needs. These funds strengthen local initiatives such as Beaver Valley Outreach, Safe N Sound, O Share and other local community groups.

## Links to 10 Year Housing and Homelessness Plan

The CHPI funding assists Grey County in providing services to fulfill goals of the Grey County 10 Year Housing and Homelessness Plan which was reviewed and updated this year. The plan identifies four key strategic areas:

- Create More Affordable Housing
- Preserve Existing Stock
- Reduce Chronic Homelessness
- Increase Supportive Housing

Related goals include:

- Initiate a system to identify individuals experiencing homelessness and focus on supports for those individuals with long term homelessness
- Work with community partners to enhance existing support services through case management and focused collaboration
- Subsidies to maintain and access sustainable housing

## Financial and Resource Implications

\$1,888,303 in provincial funding will be provided to the County of Grey for the fiscal year of April 2021 to March 2022. This program has a neutral impact on the County, as no levy funds are required. There is the ability to move funds between programs to ensure maximum usage.

## Relevant Consultation

- Internal: 10 year Housing and Homelessness Plan
- External: Various Agencies supported by these funds.

## Appendices and Attachments

None