



Committee Report

To:	Chair Nielsen and Members of Grey County Community Services Committee
Committee Date:	April 25, 2023
Subject / Report No:	CSR-CS-10-23
Title:	Homelessness Prevention Program Investment Plan 2023-24
Prepared by:	Josh Gibson, Manager Housing Programs
Reviewed by:	Anne Marie Shaw, Director of Community Services
Lower Tier(s) Affected:	County-wide
Status:	Recommendation adopted by Committee as presented per Resolution CW81-23; Endorsed by County Council June 8, 2023, per Resolution CC38-23.

Recommendation

1. That report **CSR-CS-10-23** regarding a proposed Investment Plan for Homelessness Prevention Program for 2023-24 be received; and
2. That Grey County Council endorses the Investment Plan for the Homelessness Prevention Program and approves the 2023-24 funding to be expensed by March 31, 2024.

Executive Summary

The County receives funds annually from the Province through the Homelessness Prevention Program (HPP). Redesigned on April 1, 2022, replacing the former Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative, the province provides funds annually to support programs addressing the needs of individuals and families without housing. This report details programs and services funded by the Homelessness Prevention Program for 2023-24.

Background and Discussion

The Homelessness Prevention Program (HPP) aims to support households experiencing or at risk of homelessness by improving access to adequate, suitable, and affordable housing. Under HPP, Service Managers have the flexibility to use the funding to meet local needs and priorities within the guidelines set by the province. The allocation for Homelessness Prevention Program totals \$3,282,800, which is an increase of \$1,237,200 from the 2022-23 Homelessness Prevention Program funding Grey County received.

The increased funding comes at a very critical time for Grey County and other areas of the province. We have seen increased costs and rising community needs. In addition, individuals experiencing a lack of housing present with increased needs for support than in previous years.

The increase in funding will be utilized to address the pressures on homelessness locally primarily by:

1. Covering the increased costs of operating our Short-Term Shelter Program (STSP). Primarily the expense of motel rooms and damages.
2. Supporting the addition of two additional Homelessness Program Staff covering Outreach supports as well as intake and program delivery.
3. Dedication of additional funds to support increased availability of drop-in hours primarily in the winter months by Non-Profit Community Partners.
4. Support costs associated with Transitional Housing are proven to provide an increased success rate of long-term tenancy than those individuals who are housed without supports in place.

Homelessness Prevention Program (HPP) 2023-24

Program & Description	Annual Funding (\$)
<p>Housing with Related Supports</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides supportive housing options for members of our community who need it. Includes meals, and daily task support • Decrease in funding from HPP will be covered by an alternate funding avenue 	343,605
<p>Homelessness Prevention</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable Housing Benefit • Additional funds to support with Last month's rent and transitioning cost for participants of the Short-Term Shelter Program experiencing homelessness • Homelessness Outreach Staff <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Operate the Short-term shelter program ○ Connect with individuals experiencing or at risk of homelessness ○ Increase in funds will provide the addition of 2 FT positions for the STSP 	1,264,000
<p>Emergency Shelter</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motel cost for the short-term shelter program • Significant increase in funding for this due to increased community demand, longer stays due to needs of the participants and the phase out of Social Service Relief Funding. • Emergency Shelter costs exceed available grants by \$450,000 in the 2022-23 Fiscal year and will require contribution by County surplus or reserves. 	1,000,000
<p>Services and Supports</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Enhancement funding for small community-based organizations • Staffing for supporting tenants at risk of homelessness or requiring community supports • Transitional Housing Supports with organizations to ensure successful tenancies • Homelessness Response Coordinator to strength the By Name List • Supports for Safe N Sound to extend services and hours of availability for individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness 	511,055
<p>Administration Costs (5% allowance)</p>	164,140
<p>Total Homelessness Prevention Program Funding</p>	\$3,282,800

Housing with Related Supports

Grey County funds five housing with related support 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 72 residents of Grey County per month or over 25,500 nights of accommodation per year.

This year the annual funding from HPP required to fund this program will see a reduction as we are utilizing other funding options to cover this crucial program.

Sustainable Housing Benefit

The Sustainable Housing Benefit (SHB) provides financial aid to individuals and households at risk of homelessness or currently experiencing homelessness to obtain or maintain housing. Grey County provided financial assistance in the amount of \$564,544 to 743 households in 2022 through this program. **This represents an increase of \$261,294 over 2021**, factors include increased need and the phase-out of Social Service Relief Fund, which offset some high programming costs during the past two years. Assistance provided is largely last month's rent, utility arrears, and rental arrears.

SHB Funding Provided in 2022		
Expense Type	Households Assisted	Amount Issued (\$)
Last Month's Rent	326	275,427
Utility Costs	172	120,611
Beds/Appliances/Moving Expenses	47	14,229
Pest Control/Maintenance	16	7,889
Rental Arrears	182	146,388
Total	743	\$564,544

Grey County Housing Community Relations Worker

Grey County Housing invested in a second Community Relations Worker to assist tenants in maintaining their housing, providing supports, and making referrals to community agencies. Grey County Housing is seeing a significant increase in the number of tenants requiring support such as aging in place and mental health support to remain housed.

Grey County Short Term Shelter Program (STSP)

Program Summary

Launched on September 21, 2022, the Short Term Shelter Program began operating in-house after formerly being operated by a community partner. This launch completed a transition to streamline program delivery within the Housing Department.

This program provides participants who are experiencing a lack of housing a short-term shelter option when paths of diversion fail. Access to motel rooms is used as a last resort as diversion remains the most positive outcome, allowing participants to stay in a supportive environment while searching for housing. Diversion is a term used to describe the intake process, which seeks information about a household's most recent housing loss and provides options for transportation or other services to facilitate an opportunity for an individual or family to stay temporarily with family or friends willing to host them. This diversion does not exclude individuals from accessing the available financial assistance programs available to support a move to longer-term accommodations.

Once a participant enters the program, they are met daily by a Grey County Housing Case Coordinator who does outreach at the motel to support with the creation of a housing plan, refer to supports, and assist with the housing search.

Program Barriers & Cost

In the program's first six months, costs exceeded \$944,000 in motel costs due to increased need and lack of appropriate housing for outflow from the motel program.

Some participants seeking access to the program are commonly unable to access the motel if they have past incidences within the motel, as the proprietors have discretion in rentals.

Program Successes

We have seen success in housing from the STSP program due to the streamlining of services within the Housing Department. 52 individuals/families were housed off the Grey County By-Name List between September 2022 and March 2023. The majority of these individuals and families were periodically in the STSP during the winter months.

Safe N Sound – The Space and Evening Drop In

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

In 2023-24 we are looking to support an enhanced role for Safe N Sound. They are a key community organization that provides opportunities and services for some of our most in need members of the community. This includes enhanced hours of operation and services delivered.

Homelessness Response Table

Grey Bruce's Homelessness Response Coordinator is leading the work of the Homelessness Response Table and strengthen the community response through the use of a Grey Bruce By Name List (BNL) and continuing to work towards a coordinated access system.

In 2023, Grey and Bruce County are also actively working on becoming a member of Built for Zero Canada. Built for Zero Canada is a national effort helping leading communities with the goal of ending chronic and veteran homelessness.

In joining this initiative, we will benefit from access to coaching supports, seminars, and material to educate the community and build a stronger homelessness system.

Community Enhancement Program

HPP 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.

Links to 10 Year Housing and Homelessness Plan

The HPP funding assists Grey County in providing services to fulfill goals of the Grey County 10 Year Housing and Homelessness Plan.

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

In the fall of 2023, we will begin consultations on the next update for our Housing and Homelessness plan based on consultation with community partners and community members.

Legal and Legislated Requirements

None.

Financial and Resource Implications

\$3,282,800 in provincial funding will be provided to the County of Grey for the fiscal year of April 2023 to March 2024. This program projects a neutral impact on the County for the 2023-24 fiscal year. There is the ability to move funds between programs to ensure maximum usage.

Expenditures in excess of Provincial grants for Q1 of 2023 when Social Services Relief Funds had ended will be covered by Housing surplus or Housing reserves at the end of 2023 calendar year. The deficit is estimated at \$450,000 as of April 1, 2023.

Administration costs covered under the new Homelessness Prevention Program are capped for the 2023-2024 fiscal year at 5% this is a decrease compared to the former year which allowed for 7.5%. Due to the increase in allocation the administrative cost has a net increase of \$10,720.

Relevant Consultation

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

Appendices and Attachments

[Homelessness Prevention Program - Allocation Letter 2023-24](#)