Information:

This report is to advise council of new (2006) changes to the funding of cost-shared homelessness prevention programs that are administered by the Health and Social Supports Branch (formally known as Community Programs Branch).

Since 1999, the City of Hamilton has administered five homelessness and prevention programs to assist people who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness (including those who are chronically hard-to-house). The programs were collectively known as “provincial homelessness programs”, some of which were 100% provincially funded:

- Provincial Homelessness Initiatives Fund (PHIF),
- Supports to Daily Living (SDL);
- Community Partners Program (CPP)

Additionally, there were two programs that were cost shared 80/20 with the province:

- The Emergency Hostel Redirection (EHR)
- Off the Street into Shelter (OSIS).

The gross 2005 budget for these five programs was $1,319,180 (net $91,650 for EHR and OSIS). In 2005, fifteen (15) community programs received funding and provided 20,338 units of service to vulnerable residents in our community.

In 2006, the five provincial homelessness programs have been synthesized into “Consolidated Provincial Homelessness Funding (CHPP)”, which is 100% provincial funded. The gross 2006 provincial funding is estimated to be $1,227,531. The former (2005) net levy share of $91,650 was identified as a departmental reduction in the 2006 city budget process. However, given the potential negative impact on the community, this funding will continue in 2006 and be funded within the existing Departmental 2006 budget.
The province outlined the objectives of CHPP in correspondence received in December 2005:

- To enable service system managers to consider and better support the full range of programming appropriate to local needs and priorities through clear goals, streamlined administration and flexible funding;
- To facilitate the development of a seamless program of support services to connect individuals and families to community resources and assist households experiencing or at-risk of homelessness to find and keep stable living arrangements;
- To change the culture and practice of service delivery to one focused on client outcomes, through increased flexibility in program delivery and funding mechanisms and new results-based performance measures; and
- To create an opportunity for service system managers and service providers to develop creative and innovative approaches to homelessness prevention programming. In order to receive funding, the City of Hamilton must commit to conducting a homeless count.

CHPP includes the development of a seamless program of support services to connect people to community resources and assist households experiencing or at risk of homelessness to find and maintain stable housing. Prevention initiatives support households to retain permanent accommodation. Through these services, households at risk of losing their housing are stabilized and assisted to avoid becoming homeless. Emergency relief and support services address those sleeping in temporary (or unstable) accommodation. Relief services aim to protect individuals or families experiencing homelessness from immediate harm and assist households to access available temporary and permanent accommodation. Households may be helped to connect with the mainstream system of community services, develop personal and social resources, and may receive service to support finding and maintaining longer-term accommodation.

The following are guiding principles for defining the range of activities that could be funded using CHPP:

- Homelessness prevention, reduction and relief services that are not covered by other MCSS funding envelopes. CHPP funds are not intended to be used against expenditures currently funded through a provincial-municipal cost-sharing agreement;
- System service managers must consider the full range of homelessness services/programming (from street outreach up to and including moving persons from shelter accommodation to longer term housing) appropriate to their local communities;
- Programming/services must address one or more of the program goals; and
- Activities to support effective planning and management of the service system should be supported (e.g. research, development of community plans).
The City of Hamilton is one of 47 system service managers who administer funding for provincial homelessness programs. Until 2006, no administrative funding was provided to municipalities for the purpose of serving as the system service manager of homelessness funding. As the service system manager of CHPP, the City must agree to undertake, document, and report a regular count of local homeless populations. The City is required to collect and report quarterly data elements (as part of the standard service contracting process) to support the following six performance measures:

- Percent of households at imminent risk of homelessness served that remained housed;
- Percent of households at risk of homelessness served that received personal support services;
- Number of households experiencing homelessness served;
- Percent of households served that moved from the street to temporary accommodation;
- Percent of households served that moved from the street to permanent housing; and
- Percent of households living in temporary accommodation served that moved to permanent housing.

The city may use up to 10% of the CHPP funding allocation (approximately $122,750 annualized) towards expenditures related to overall (program) administrative costs, including the new reporting expectations previously outlined. The department will use this funding to support the increased expectations associated with data analysis, research and program evaluation, and policy development functions in order to effectively manage CHPP. Accordingly, the department will fund 1.3 FTE positions (.1 program manager, .1 program secretary, .1 data support and 1.0 Program analyst). These administrative costs will be funded from departmental surplus.

These positions will not only support the administrative functions associated with CHPP, but will sustain data analysis and program monitoring of related cost shared provincial programs, such as Emergency Shelters and Residential Care Facility Subsidy Program. In addition, the federal Supporting Community Partnerships Initiatives (SCIPI) is no longer expected to provide funding beyond April 2007, so the city will lose its administrative capacity as the “community entity” to plan and report on homelessness indicators. CHPP provides the city with an opportunity to provide this important function for the entire community, including the service providers, in a sustainable, ongoing way.

The department will be engaging the community in the coming months in a process to develop a three-year strategic plan to address the current and future service needs of persons experiencing homelessness and for those at risk of homelessness in Hamilton.

This process will help to inform the department on the needs, gaps of this vulnerable population and therefore provide guiding principles for allocation of CHPP. 2006 will be used to transition the programs from their previous funding to implementation of CHPP.
The department will negotiate the new service contract with MCSS, notify currently funded service providers that funding will be discontinued this year, and that programs that meet the new objectives for CHPP will be considered for funding from September 2006 to December 2007.

Joe-Anne Priel  
General Manager  
Community Services Department