

Report to Council



Date: April 12, 2021
To: Council
From: City Manager
Subject: Strengthening Communities Services' Program Grant Application
Department: Community Safety Department

Recommendation:

THAT Council receives, for information, the report from the Community Safety Department dated April 12th with respect to the UBCM Local Government Program Services for the Strengthening Communities' Services Program;

AND THAT Council directs staff to apply for grant funding for the Outdoor Sheltering Strategy through the UBCM Local Government Program Services for the Strengthening Communities' Services Program;

AND THAT Council support the current proposed activities and endorse staff to provide overall grant management;

AND THAT, if the grant application is successful, the 2021 Financial Plan be amended to include the receipt of funds.

Purpose:

To approve a grant application for funding of a proposed Outdoor Sheltering Strategy.

Background:

The Government of Canada and the Province of British Columbia recently announced the Strengthening Communities' Services grant which is a \$100 million investment to support unsheltered homeless populations and address related community impacts.

"Unsheltered homeless" is defined as people who lack housing and are not accessing emergency shelters or accommodation, except during extreme weather conditions. This includes people living in public or private spaces without consent (i.e., parks, sidewalks, squares, vacant buildings) and people living in places not intended for permanent human habitation (i.e., vehicles, garages, attics, tents, or shacks). The intent of the grant is to assist local governments to:

- Improve health and safety of unsheltered homeless people living in public or private spaces, including reduced risk of COVID-19 or other disease transmission;
- Reduce community concerns about public health and safety in neighbourhoods where unsheltered homeless populations are seeking temporary shelter and services;
- Improve coordination among eligible applicants and health/social service providers, Indigenous organizations and others working on housing, homelessness and service provision; and
- Increase capacity of eligible applicants to work with homeless persons and Indigenous organizations towards culturally safe and trauma-informed responses.

Discussion:

The Strengthening Communities' Services Program can contribute up to 100 per cent of the cost of eligible activities. The funding guidelines are population based. Therefore, Kelowna is eligible to receive \$2.5M in funding for eligible costs incurred between September 18, 2020 and June 2022. Funding permitting, applications for projects that exceed the funding guidelines may be considered provided that applications are able to demonstrate evidence of need in the community.

The City of Kelowna application takes a strategic approach by building an overarching and balanced outdoor sheltering strategy; one that strives to meet the needs of people sheltering outdoors in our community while reducing community impacts. The proposed strategy encompasses initiatives from varied City branches including Community Safety, Risk, Social Development and Communications to form a multi-faceted approach. The City's application includes the following retroactive and proposed initiatives:

1. Operational costs incurred for overnight shelter site (Sept 2020 to April 2021)
2. Development / construction costs for a new overnight shelter site
3. Eligible operating costs of the new overnight shelter site (May 2021 to June 2022)
4. Personal Belongings Storage Program, capital and operational costs
5. Temporary Outdoor Sheltering Coordinator (July 2021 to June 2022)
6. Operational Costs of Day use sites
7. Coordinated Outreach Services
8. Community Inclusion Campaign
9. Queensway Washroom

In developing the application, key organizations were engaged and this is reflected in the letters of partnership accompanying the application from Journey Home, Kelowna Friendship Society, and the RCMP. The deadline to apply to the grant program is April 16, 2021.

Conclusion:

With approval of Council, the City of Kelowna will apply for funding under the Strengthening Communities' Services Program for an Outdoor Sheltering Strategy. If funded, this will offset costs already incurred for outdoor sheltering in our community while also enabling enhanced services and supports for people sheltering outdoors through to June 2022.

Internal Circulation:

Financial Services
Active Living & Culture
Partnership & Investments
Communications

Considerations applicable to this report:

Financial/Budgetary Considerations

If the City's grant application is successful, the 2021 Financial Plan need to be amended to include the receipt of funds.

Considerations not applicable to this report:

Legal/Statutory Authority

Legal/Statutory Procedural Requirements

Existing Policy

External Agency/Public Comments

Communications Comments

Submitted by: D. Caul, Community Safety Director

Approved for inclusion:



S. Leatherdale, Division Director - Corporate & Protective Services

cc: Divisional Director, Corporate & Protective Services
Divisional Director, Active Living & Culture
Divisional Director, Financial Services
Social Development Manager
Grants and Special Projects Manager