

Report to Council



Date: April 11, 2022
To: Council
From: City Manager
Subject: 2022 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 11th with respect to the UBCM Local Government Program Services for the 2022 Strengthening Communities' Services Program funding opportunity;

AND THAT Council directs staff to apply for grant funding for the evolution of the Kelowna 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 2022 Financial Plan be amended to include the receipt of funds.

Purpose:

To approve staff to apply to the 2022 Strengthening Communities' Services Program for the evolution of the Kelowna Outdoor Sheltering Strategy.

Background:

Through the Safe Restart funding announced in 2021 by the Government of Canada and the Province of BC, \$100 million was allocated for the Strengthening Communities' Services Program. The initial intake of the Strengthening Communities' Services Program saw approximately \$80 million delivered to local governments. The remaining funds are now available through the 2022 intake. The deadline to apply to the grant program is April 22, 2022.

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to an increase in unsheltered homelessness, and related community health and safety challenges in many communities, including Kelowna. "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 continued 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.

At the April 12, 2021 Council meeting, Council was provided with an overview of the 2021 grant request for the initial Outdoor Sheltering Strategy and passed the following resolution:

Resolution	Date
<p>R0400/21/04/12 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;</p> <p>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;</p> <p>AND THAT Council support the current proposed activities and endorse staff to provide overall grant management;</p> <p>AND THAT, if the grant application is successful, the 2021 Financial Plan be amended to include the receipt of funds.</p>	<p>April 12, 2021</p>

Discussion:

Under the Strengthening Communities' Services Program, funding guidelines are population-based and up to 100 per cent of the cost of eligible activities are covered. In the first round of funding, the City of Kelowna received \$3.2 million for the Kelowna Outdoor Sheltering Strategy. For the second intake, the funding guideline shows that Kelowna is eligible for \$625,000 in funding for eligible costs incurred for a one-year timeframe from grant approval. Funding permitting, applications for projects that exceed the funding guidelines may be considered if applications are able to demonstrate evidence of need in the community.

Once again, the City of Kelowna application will take a strategic approach by continuing to build upon 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 Strategy continues to encompass initiatives from several City branches including Social Development, Risk Management, and Community Safety, to form a multi-faceted approach.

The 2022 application, which will include ongoing operational costs for the overnight sheltering site and will demonstrate an evolution of Kelowna's Outdoor Sheltering Strategy. It will embed learning from the initial strategy while linking the approach to outdoor sheltering to the existing work through our Journey Home Strategy to address homelessness.

The focus will be on building a Navigation Hub that includes:

- ❖ Day use site operated by a local agency with strong relationships to those sheltering outside;
- ❖ Coordination of outreach, social service providers and primary care and specialist health care teams to support people's needs and to link them to community resources and services;
- ❖ Peer Navigators-hosted personal belonging storage program and service connection assistance (ie: filling out housing/income assistance paperwork);
- ❖ Additional satellite services including a hygiene centre and dispersed personal belongings storage; and
- ❖ Proactive response for extreme weather response; both extreme heat and extreme cold.

In developing the initial application, key community organizations were engaged. Once again, these partners (Journey Home, Ki-Low-Na Friendship Society and the RCMP) have endorsed the strategy and have provided continuing letters of partnership.

Conclusion:

With approval of Council, the City of Kelowna will apply for 2022 Strengthening Communities' Services Program for the evolution of the Outdoor Sheltering Strategy. If funded, this will enable enhanced services and supports for people sheltering outdoors as well as offset costs for ongoing outdoor sheltering in our community for an additional 12 months.

Internal Circulation:

Financial Services
Active Living & Culture
Partnership & Investments
Risk Management

Considerations applicable to this report:

Financial/Budgetary Considerations: If the City's grant application is successful, the 2022 Financial Plan will need to be amended to include the receipt of funds.

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
Risk Manager