
MANAGEMENT REPORT

Date: March 22, 2023
To: Social Services Sub-committee
From: Alex Burgess, Manager of Ontario Works
Kim McElroy, Director of Social Services
Report #: SOC23-011
Attachments: None

Title: Family Services Perth Huron Agreement

Objective: To consider approval for The Corporation of the City of Stratford to enter into an agreement with Family Services Perth Huron, to deliver a counselling and mental health supports program to participants involved with the Social Services Department, as noted in the agreement and to request delegated authority for the Director of Social Services or Chief Administrative Officer to execute future renewal agreements with Family Services Perth-Huron until 2028.

Background: The City of Stratford has been in contract with Family Services Perth-Huron over the past several years, most recently in a contract that ended on December 31, 2022.

Family Services Perth-Huron (FSPH) was established in 1971, in Stratford, Ontario, as a private, non-profit, community-based registered charity. FSPH is dedicated to supporting, strengthening, and enriching the lives of individuals, couples and families through individualized counselling, support services, advocacy, and education to meet the needs of the community. They work closely with other services within the community on our client's behalf to create a plan best suited to their situation. They also offer referrals to community services and work with clients in a confidential and accessible setting.

Social Services staff presently make direct referrals to FSPH, and clients complete the intake process with that agency either over the phone or in person. FSPH presently reserves appointment slots for Social Services clients, and works with them on an ongoing basis while they are accessing services through our office. Using clinical social work, psychotherapy and supportive counselling, a broad range of services and supports are provided for participants to overcome mental health crises and personal challenges, increase life stabilization and employability, and ultimately support with greater life satisfaction for Social Services clients.

Analysis: The Social Services Department strives to ensure that any barriers participants face, whether that be housing instability, mental health crises, inter-personal challenges, or community engagement, be addressed in a supportive and sustainable manner. For that reason, the contract with FSPH has been instrumental in supporting clients who are willing to access services through their agency and has provided a tool for staff to utilize to support clients moving towards greater life stabilization. One cannot address employment barriers without further addressing barriers to employment such as housing stability, mental health and community engagement. FSPH utilizes only regulated clinicians, experienced in delivering services and interventions through a trauma and domestic violence informed lens, who are in good standing and a licensed member of the appropriate regulatory body, such as the Registered College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers and the College of Psychotherapists.

The agreement reflects a wide scope of services that are offered to support life stabilization, employability, increased community engagement and addresses many barriers to mental health wellness that clients face. FSPH has agreed to deliver the counselling and support services to Social Services participants to assist with life stabilization and enhance community engagement. The goal of the counselling program provided by FSPH is to assist eligible participants in pursuing employment goals, seeking and maintaining life stabilization, reducing isolation, securing and maintaining stable housing, focusing on overall life stability and employability and engaging in the community in healthy ways. This is done through clinical and broad-based social work interventions utilizing such modalities as Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), Dialectical Behavioural Therapy (DBT), Satir Systems, Internal Family systems and other trauma informed modalities.

Participants are supported through a variety of FSPH strength-based offerings designed for prevention and intervention. These include individual or couples counselling, group psychotherapy, intake support including social service clinics, individualized service plans, and psycho-educational support groups geared and designed to the needs of the Participant. Services will be offered through both virtual and in-person delivery methods. Key deliverables have been defined within the agreement and will be reported on both monthly and annually. The target for the 2023 contract is 100 participants served over 800 hours of service, completed during the calendar year.

In 2022, FSPH supported 96 participants with over 796 hours of service. The primary issues most addressed by FSPH in 2022, often trauma related and intersectional with other mental health challenges, were challenges with homelessness or a risk of homelessness, overall life stress and instability, addictions, and personal relationship struggles.

As FSPH is uniquely positioned as the only agency in the catchment area capable of providing these services, the City's Procurement Policy, section 37 permits sole-source approvals and is appropriate for the contract renewal.

The agreement with FSPH and corresponding program delivery is provided through the Ontario Works Employment Supports portfolio, and is 100% funded by the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services. The funding requested has increased to \$95,000 per year for services rendered, and corresponds with a significant increase to the number of appointments being offered. There is an availability of an additional \$20,000 for enhanced services, at the discretion of the Director of Social Services for unique and emergency situations requiring clinical interventions.

Financial Implications:

Financial impact to current year operating budget:

The program expenses and the 100% funding are administered by the Ontario Works division, Employment Supports. The cost of the program is \$95,000 with an additional \$20,000 to be made available for emergency and enhanced services requiring clinical intervention, at the discretion of the Director of Social Services.

Financial impact on future year operating budget:

As this program is 100% Provincially funded through the Ontario Works division, there is no anticipated impact on future year operating budgets. The contract is subject to the City's budget approval and the Provincial funding, on an annual basis.

Legal Considerations:

The agreement being utilized, and contract language was reviewed by the City's Solicitor in 2021. The only updates to the agreement pertain to enhanced service levels, the funding amount, and the key deliverables.

Alignment with Strategic Priorities:

Strengthening our Plans, Strategies and Partnerships

Partnering with the community to make plans for our collective priorities in arts, culture, heritage and more. Communicating clearly with the public around our plans and activities.

Alignment with One Planet Principles:

Health and Happiness

Encouraging active, social, meaningful lives to promote good health and wellbeing.

Equity and Local Economy

Creating safe, equitable places to live and work which support local prosperity and international fair trade.

Staff Recommendation: THAT The Corporation of the City of Stratford enter into an agreement with Family Services Perth-Huron to deliver the counselling and support services program as detailed in the agreement for 2023;

THAT the Mayor and Clerk, or their respective delegates, be authorized to execute the agreement with Family Services Perth-Huron on behalf of the municipal Corporation;

AND THAT City Council delegates its signing authority to the Director of Social Services or the Chief Administrative Officer to execute future renewal agreements with Family Services Perth-Huron until 2028, subject to satisfactory contract performance or any amendments to funding identified by the City.

Prepared by:	Alex Burgess, Manager of Ontario Works
Recommended by:	Kim McElroy, Director of Social Services
	Joan Thomson, Chief Administrative Officer