



MANAGEMENT REPORT

Date: January 14, 2025
To: Social Services Sub-committee
From: Alex Burgess, Manager of Ontario Works
John Ritz, Homelessness and Housing Stability Supervisor
Kim McElroy, Director of Social Services
Report Number: SOC25-002
Attachments: None

Title: CMHA Outreach Worker Service Agreement

Objective: To consider approval to enter into an updated three-year agreement with the Canadian Mental Health Association Huron Perth Addictions and Mental Health Services to provide housing-based case management services across Stratford, St Marys, and Perth County.

Background: The City of Stratford has partnered for several years with the Canadian Mental Health Association Huron-Perth Addictions and Mental Health Services (herein referred to as CMHA HP), formerly known as Choices for Change, for the delivery of housing-based case management services. CMHA HP was a founding partner of the Home For Good funded Supported Housing of Perth Program (SHOPP), now known as the Intensive Case Management program (ICM), and currently operate the North Perth Fixed Site portion of the program. CMHA HP has also worked with the City of Stratford on other contracts, including the street-focused outreach program which ended on September 30, 2024, and the currently operating Ontario Works Service Agreement which provides support and case management specific to OW clients.

The new agreement combines elements of three agreements mentioned above, focussing on the services delivered through the scattered site case management portion of the ICM program and case management services at the Connections Centre.

Analysis: The updated agreement focuses on services that improve housing stability for our most vulnerable community members as well as services for those actively experiencing homelessness who attend the Connection Centre in Stratford.

The initial component of the agreement is related to the scattered site component of the Intensive Case Management program. The agreement provides \$150,000 for two

FTE case managers who will carry caseloads comprised of the individuals facing the most complex barriers in our community, with the caseload ranging between 12 and 15 participants. The services offered begin when the individual is experiencing homelessness and continue after they are housed, ensuring an appropriate level of housing stability is achieved before the individual is discharged from the program. The caseloads at CMHA will, where possible, be targeted to individuals who identify mental health or addictions challenges to acquiring or maintaining their housing. Intake for the program will be provided by the City of Stratford Social Services Department, utilizing the local by-name list as well as other factors such as interactions with emergency services and interactions with local service providers. The City of Stratford will maintain oversight over the program by completing regular file reviews and data will be submitted to the Social Services Department on a yearly basis, allowing for evaluation and review of the services being provided. This portion of the agreement will be funded through the Homelessness Prevention Program (HPP) funding received from the Government of Ontario.

The secondary component of the agreement focuses on case management services being provided through the Connections Centre as well as housing stability services at the Perth and Stratford Housing Corporation. A further \$60,940.50 will be provided for another FTE case manager to not only support community members who engage with services at the Stratford Connections Centre but also for residents of the PSHC where housing stability concerns have been identified. The services provided through this agreement will be housing-focused in nature, with expectations that document readiness, housing applications, housing searches and community-based referrals are completed alongside the provision of basic needs at the Connections Centre. Due to a high prevalence of social assistance clients on the by-name list, and accessing services defined in this agreement, the Ontario Works program will be funding this portion of the agreement. The funding will be provided through the 100% Provincial Funding component of the OW budget. This agreement will replace the current Ontario Works Service Agreement and any impact to clients will be monitored closely, with the ability to modify the agreement in the future, if required.

Due to their unique and exclusive capabilities, CMHA HP has been sole sourced for this agreement in accordance with the requirements set forth in Section 37 of Policy P.5.1 "Purchasing and Materials Management" and approved by the Manager of Financial Services as well as the Director of Social Services.

The program outcomes have been more clearly defined, as have expectations and activities that should be completed during the term of this agreement. The program is fully funded through Government of Ontario funding, so there is no anticipated impact on the tax levy currently.

The agreement is funded by the Government of Ontario through two separate funding envelopes, one from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) and the other from the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS).

The total cost of this agreement for 2025 is expected to be \$210,940.50 for three FTE caseworkers, funded as follows:

- \$150,000 from the Homelessness Prevention Program (MMAH)
- \$60,940.50 from the Ontario Works 100% Provincial funding (MCCSS)

In relation to Ontario Works, this is a \$20,940.50 increase over the current agreement as the current Ontario Works Service Agreement pays CMHA \$40,000 per year, which will be cancelled because of the updates to the program.

Financial Implications:

Financial impact to current year operating budget:

There is no anticipated impact on the municipal tax levy currently.

Financial impact on future year operating budget:

The Outreach Worker Service Agreement will be in place for three years, subject to no concerns related to finances or performance. The anticipated cost for 2026 and 2027 is \$210,940.50 per year. The total cost of the three-year agreement is \$632,821.50.

The program will be funded through the Homelessness Prevention Program and the Ontario Works program. There is a 90-day exit clause built into the agreement, in case of any financial or performance-related concerns, and the agreement can only continue if the funding from HPP and OW continues to be provided and is included in the municipal budget.

There is no anticipated impact on the municipal tax levy in future years because of this program.

Alignment with Strategic Priorities:

Build Housing Stability

This report aligns with this priority as the sole focus of the program is providing support with the attainment and maintenance of housing. The program focuses not only on housing stability but also on the supporting clients with accessing safe, affordable, and permanent housing in the community.

Work Together For Greater Impact

This report aligns with this priority as the program continues to enhance partnerships within the community and build upon long-standing relationships that provide support and benefit to clients within the service manager area.

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.

Culture and Community

Nurturing local identity and heritage, empowering communities, and promoting a culture of sustainable living.

Staff Recommendation: THAT the Corporation of the City of Stratford enter into a three-year agreement with the Canadian Mental Health Association Huron Perth Addictions and Mental Health Services for the provision of services defined in the Outreach Worker Service Agreement;

THAT the Mayor and Clerk, or their respective delegates, be authorized to sign the Outreach Worker Service Agreement with the Canadian Mental Health Association Huron Perth Addictions and Mental Health Services;

AND THAT the Director of Social Services be authorized to approve any contract amendments, subject to no changes to the financial considerations or identified performance concerns, for the duration of the contract and subject to providing the City Clerk with any approved contract amendments.

Prepared by: Alex Burgess, Manager of Ontario Works
John Ritz, Homelessness and Housing Stability Supervisor

Recommended by: Kim McElroy, Director of Social Services
Joan Thomson, Chief Administrative Officer