



Report

Subject: Out of the Cold Program: 2023-2024 Season

Department: Community Services

Division: CMS

Report #: CMS-2023-048

Meeting Date: 2023-11-27

Recommendations

That report CMS-2023-048, Out of the Cold Program: 2023-2024 Season be received;

And that Staff be authorized to work with community partners to designate one non-profit organization to host the Out of the Cold Program for the 2023 – 2024 season;

And that an upset limit of \$30,000 to fund 50% of the operating costs of the Out of the Cold Program, 2023-2024 season, be funded through the 2024 Community Grant Program;

And that Council pass a by-law authorizing the Mayor and Clerk to sign the Out of the Cold Service Agreement on behalf of the Corporation of the Town of Orangeville.

Background and Analysis

On April 26, 2021, Council arranged for a Men's Homelessness Committee to explore homelessness challenges specific to males; determine gaps in service and opportunities to fill those gaps. On January 24, 2022 the committee provided its recommendations through Report CPS-2021-086. One of the recommendations was to create warming centres when the temperature falls below -6°C.

The Committee engaged in discussions with the County of Dufferin, neighbouring municipalities/regions and related community agencies and determined efforts needed to be directed at an emergency shelter, typically known on a national level as an "Out of the Cold" (OOTC) program.

It was noted that warming centres are provided during facility operating hours, however, an Out of the Cold facility is a temporary emergency shelter, set up in collaboration with other agencies on an overnight basis.

In 2022, The Town and the County entered into an agreement with Dufferin Youth Shelter (“Choices”) to house an Out of the Cold program. At the time, Choices was preparing to open a men’s emergency shelter which could be used to support OOTC. The program successfully operated from December 2022 to April 2023.

2022-2023 Arrangements

Originally Choices was allocated \$30,000 to operate the Out of the Cold program for the 2023 season (January to April and November to December), as part of the “corporate allocations for community organizations requiring predictable funding over longer periods”, (January 17, 2023 Council meeting). However, there was no Council resolution to formally allocate the proposed \$30,000, as discussed at this meeting.

Staff returned to Council in April 2023 and requested approval to fund the OOTC program in the amount of \$11,000 for the December 2022 to April 2023 winter season only, and propose follow-up discussions with the County, Community Services Department and Choices take place, to plan for the 2023-2024 season.

This direction intentionally delayed the approval of the additional \$30,000 in hopes of giving the partners a chance to debrief and analyze the outcomes of the 2023 Winter program, and to develop a more informed funding model for future seasons.

2023-2024 Proposed Direction

In May of 2023 Town and County Staff met with Choices and discussed the 2022-2023 season, specifically what worked and what did not work. Choices agreed to submit a detailed budget outlining actual costs and translate that information to a proposed 2023-2024 financial plan.

Change in leadership at Choices has delayed the submission of a 2023-2024 financial plan and recently Choices informed Town and County staff that they do not have the capacity to host the OOTC program this season. The Men’s Shelter is now fully operational and at its highest occupancy rate since opening the doors in March.

County and Town Staff, along with Mayor Post met with members of the New Hope Community Church (Salvation Army) to gauge their capacity to host the OOTC program and unfortunately, they currently do not have enough staff and volunteers to house the overnight program. Discussions will continue with non-profit organizations to hopefully secure a local OOTC program before the temperature drops below -6 degrees.

Once an organization is secured, the Town will enter into an agreement, complete with a program funding model, for the 2023-2024 winter season. Note, the County will execute a separate agreement with the organization. When OOTC wraps up in April

2024, all parties will evaluate the program, make any necessary adjustments and ideally enter into a longer-term agreement that offers stability to the program and to the service providers.

Strategic Alignment

Strategic Plan

Strategic Goal: Community Vitality

Objective: Well-Being – Support citizen and staff health, security, and well-being

Sustainable Neighbourhood Action Plan

Theme: Social wellbeing

Strategy: Contributing to County initiatives that address poverty and homelessness at the source.

Notice Provisions

N/A

Financial Impact

Town Council committed funding to Choices for Youth to support the Out of the Cold program in the amount of \$11,000 for the 2023 season. This funding came from the Community Grant Program.

The County of Dufferin also contributed \$11,000 for a total of \$22,000 dollars to publicly fund the OOTC program. This funding covered, bedding, meals, and staffing.

Staff are requesting an upset limit of \$30,000 to secure a community partner to host the OOTC program. This amount is in line with Council's original funding allocation dating back to the January 2023 Council meeting. The County of Dufferin is proposing to commit matching funding for this program.

The proposed allocation would be funded through the 2024 Community Grants program, representing a \$19,000 incremental increase over the 2023 allocation.

Respectfully submitted

Prepared by

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Attachment(s):

N/A