

# The Regional Municipality of York

Committee of the Whole  
Community and Health Services  
June 11, 2020

Report of the Commissioner of Community and Health Services

## Contract Award for Delivery of the Homelessness Prevention Program

### 1. Recommendations

1. Council approve the award of contract with The Governing Council of the Salvation Army in Canada to deliver York Region's Homelessness Prevention Program through The Salvation Army Northridge Community Church, Aurora, Ontario for an initial term of two years starting January 1, 2021 and ending December 31, 2022, at an estimated annual cost of \$1,420,000 excluding HST, subject to budget approval.
2. The Commissioner of Community and Health Services be authorized to execute the agreement on behalf of York Region.
3. The Commissioner of Community and Health Services be authorized to extend the agreement with the service provider for up to three additional terms of one year each, on same terms and conditions, for an estimated total five-year cost of \$7,100,000 excluding HST, provided the service provider has performed services to the satisfaction of the Commissioner and the cost is within the approved budget.

### 2. Summary

This report seeks Council approval to award and enter into an agreement with The Governing Council of the Salvation Army in Canada through The Salvation Army Northridge Community Church, to deliver the Homelessness Prevention Program for a term of up to five years, under Request for Proposal P-19-230. Council approval is required under Section 7.13 and Section 18.1(c) of the Purchasing Bylaw 2017-30 since the total cost of the contract exceeds \$2,000,000.

#### Key Points:

- York Region's Homelessness Prevention Program is intended to prevent homelessness by meeting the emergency housing needs of low and moderate income residents who do not receive financial assistance from Ontario Works or Ontario Disability Support Program
- Aimed at stabilizing housing situation, the program offers case management support and financial assistance for rent, mortgage, utilities and other housing costs

- The Homelessness Prevention Program is currently delivered by two community agencies on behalf of the Region and the contracts expire December 31, 2020
- Request for Proposal P-19-230, to deliver the program up to a five-year term beginning January 2021 was released on September 11, 2019 and closed on October 23, 2019
- Regional staff completed a thorough assessment of proposals, including consultation with staff subject matter experts, evaluation of technical proposals and financial statements, and proponent interviews
- The Salvation Army Northridge Community Church was the successful proponent to deliver service across all nine municipalities. Moving to a single service provider, located in in the Town of Aurora, will not impact service as there are alternate methods to in-person delivery, including discussion with residents virtually or over the phone, and use of electronic documentation and payment. Staff will work closely with the service provider to transition and expand services Region-wide.
- Council approval is required at this time to allow for sufficient time to develop the service agreement, undertake transition planning and initiate activities so the service provider can seamlessly deliver services starting January 2021
- The Homelessness Prevention Program is part of the Region's social services response to address needs of vulnerable people as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic

### 3. Background

#### **The Homelessness Prevention Program helps people who are not receiving social assistance to keep their homes or access housing they can afford**

As the Service Manager for housing and homelessness services (under *Housing Services Act, 2011*), York Region plays a vital role in helping vulnerable low and moderate income residents stabilize their housing. The Region plans, manages and provides oversight and funding to diverse agencies that help people who are homeless, or at risk of homelessness, find and keep housing.

The Homelessness Prevention Program supports people not receiving Ontario Works or Ontario Disability Support Program assistance, and who have a stable income but for unforeseen circumstances are at risk of losing their housing. The program provides case management and financial assistance for rent, mortgage payments, utilities and other housing costs (see Attachment 1 for additional program details).

The Region also delivers a program for recipients of Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program assistance called the Housing Stability Program. This program provides similar supports as the Homelessness Prevention Program, but is administered directly by Social Services staff.

## **Similar homelessness prevention programs are delivered in other municipalities**

Programs that help people find or maintain housing is common in municipalities. Program details and delivery approaches may differ, but the goals are the same. For example:

- The City of Toronto funds the Toronto Rent Bank Program to provide interest-free loans to eligible residents facing eviction due to short-term financial difficulties. Clients also receive help to access wrap around supports for housing stability
- Durham, Halton and Peel Regions directly provide financial assistance to eligible residents for utility or rent arrears, first and last month's rent, and moving costs

## **Homelessness Prevention Program helps divert vulnerable residents from costlier interventions needed to support those experiencing homelessness**

Established in 2001, the Region's Homelessness Prevention Program helps an average of 300 to 400 households annually. In 2019, 328 households received an average of approximately \$2,560 in financial assistance.

The program recognizes that helping people maintain housing costs less than to support and find housing for someone who is homeless. For example, it generally costs approximately \$2,850 per month to provide emergency shelter space for someone experiencing homelessness. Keeping people in their homes also promotes stability, and keeping families stable in their communities in turn promotes community safety and well-being.

## **Homelessness Prevention Program is delivered by community agencies on behalf of the Region**

The Homelessness Prevention Program is delivered by community agencies, allowing the Region to benefit from the agencies' familiarity with local needs, expertise with supporting specific populations and existing service infrastructure.

Two service providers have been delivering the Homelessness Prevention Program: The Salvation Army Northridge Community Church serves the northern part of the Region (since 2001), while Jewish Family and Child Services of Greater Toronto serves the southern part (since 2009). In [February 2016](#) Regional Council approved annual extensions of the two service providers up to December 31, 2020, subject to satisfactory performance by the service providers.

Applications to the Homelessness Prevention Program are received and intake meetings arranged through Access York. The service provider reviews applications for eligibility, assesses needs, connects to wrap around supports, issues financial assistance, and checks in with households at regular intervals. To ensure the program is delivered in accordance with the contract, a Regional contract manager is assigned to regularly engage the service provider on program activities and performance. Service providers submit quarterly financial statements and reports that are reviewed by Regional staff.

## **Homelessness Prevention Program is part of the Region's COVID-19 response**

Homelessness Prevention Program is part of the Region's [social service response](#) to address needs of vulnerable people as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. It is anticipated that there will be an increased program demand during the second half of the year, after months of income challenges and discontinuation of time-limited financial supports. When the Province's moratorium on enforcing evictions is lifted, homeowners and tenants may face arrears and/or eviction which could also result in an influx of applications to the program. Provincial funding from the Social Services Relief Fund (delivered through the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative) has been allocated to meet the additional anticipated demand this year.

### **4. Analysis**

#### **A competitive process was undertaken to select a provider for a five-year term**

In September 2019, the Region issued Request for Proposal P-19-230 to deliver the Homelessness Prevention Program for a five-year term beginning January 1, 2021. Five agencies submitted proposals:

- Catholic Community Services of York Region
- Jewish Family and Child Service of Greater Toronto
- John Howard Society of York Region
- The Housing Help Centre
- The Salvation Army Northridge Community Church

Proponents were evaluated using the published criteria and a thorough multi-step assessment process outlined in the Request for Proposal. The process included consultation with staff subject matter experts, evaluation of technical proposals and audited financial statements, proponent interviews, and assessment of the financial bid.

Regional staff evaluated key aspects of proponent technical submissions deemed critical to successful program delivery, including but not limited to:

- Proponent profile, including years in business and experience and qualifications
- Demonstrated administrative and program capacity to plan, implement and deliver the required services
- Proposed program design and delivery model, including service locations, methodology to provide required services, and timetable and work plan to undertake and complete the contract

- Proposed program management model, including program oversight, financial administration, and management of client and other confidential information
- Ability and experience serving the diverse and complex needs of York Region residents with low to moderate income and engaging community stakeholders

Proposals were evaluated using a two-envelope system with a weighting of 80% for the technical component and 20% for the financial component. Two of the five proponents, John Howard Society of York Region and The Salvation Army Northridge Community Church, achieved a score above 60% in the technical evaluation and moved forward to the interview stage. As both passed the interview component, their financial bids (showing cost to administer the program) were opened and assessed.

The proposals were evaluated in accordance with Regional policy, bylaws and practices and in consultation with the Procurement Office.

The two proponents that advanced to the interview stage and their technical and financial scores are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1**  
**Evaluation Summary**

Agency	Technical Score (80%)	Financial Score (20%)	Total Score (100%)	Financial Proposal* (excluding HST)	Cost per Technical Point
John Howard Society of York Region	64.05	18.04	82.10	\$619,675.89	\$9,674.86
The Salvation Army Northridge Community Church	62.00	20.00	82.00	\$558,980.00	\$9,015.81

\*Administration cost for initial two-year term

**The Salvation Army Northridge Community Church achieved the lowest cost per technical point in response to Request for Proposal P-19-230**

The Salvation Army Northridge Community Church was identified as the successful proponent with the lowest cost per technical point.

The Salvation Army is one of the largest direct providers of social services in Canada, supporting vulnerable people in 400 communities across the country. In York Region, it provides homelessness supports and shelter services at Belinda’s Place (Emergency and Transitional Housing for Women) and Sutton Youth Shelter. Salvation Army’s Northridge

Community Church has been delivering the Homelessness Prevention Program since inception and is well-positioned to expand services across the entire region as the sole service provider of the program.

### **Staff will work with The Salvation Army Northridge Community Church to allow for seamless continuation of service delivery**

As the successful proponent has delivered the Homelessness Prevention Program in the northern part of York Region since 2001 and sole provider of the program from 2001 to 2009, Regional staff anticipate a seamless transition to delivery of region-wide services starting in 2021. Over the next several months, Regional staff will work with the successful proponent on building capacity to expand services to all residents, communicating program changes to residents and service partners, and transitioning program information. Regional staff will also work with Jewish Family and Child Services on an orderly wind-down of program activity.

### **Helping residents maintain stable housing is a priority for York Region**

By helping residents with low to moderate income find or keep housing they can afford - a key social determinant of health - the program helps achieve priorities under the Region's 2019 to 2023 Strategic Plan, particularly housing stability and homelessness prevention objectives and activities under "Support Community Health, Safety and Well-being".

## **5. Financial**

The total estimated cost of the contract to deliver the Homelessness Prevention Program for up to a five-year term is \$7,100,000; \$1,420,000 annually. This includes the cost of providing financial assistance to eligible households and program administration cost (approximately 20% - which is usual for the program). Generally, program costs are funded by a mix of tax levy (63%) and provincial funding through the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (37%). This has been included in the department's 2021 budget outlook.

The increased program demand anticipated in 2020 as a result of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic may continue in 2021 and beyond. Additional funding for 2021 onwards, along with associated scope and contingency adjustments to the service provider contract, as permitted by the Purchasing Bylaw, may be required to address program need and will be brought forward as part of the budget process.

## **6. Local Impact**

The Homelessness Prevention Program is available to eligible residents across all nine York Region local municipalities. Stable housing is an essential foundation that allows people to thrive and participate in their communities and is key to preventing and reducing homelessness. Helping stabilize housing for low to moderate income residents can help reduce the cost of more expensive emergency or crisis supports in communities across the Region.

## 7. Conclusion

The Region's Homelessness Prevention Program helps prevent homelessness by providing eligible residents with supports to help stabilize their housing. Through a competitive procurement and thorough assessment process, The Governing Council of the Salvation Army in Canada through The Salvation Army Northridge Community Church has been identified the successful proponent to deliver the program for a term of up to five years. Council approval is requested to award the contract.

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For more information on this report, please contact Joseph Silva, Director, Strategies and Partnerships at 1-877-464-9675 ext. 74182. Accessible formats or communication supports are available upon request.

Recommended by: **Katherine Chislett**  
Commissioner of Community and Health Services

Approved for Submission: **Bruce Macgregor**  
Chief Administrative Officer

May 21, 2020  
Attachments (1)  
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