

Report to Community and Protective Services Committee

To: Chair and Members, Community and Protective Services Committee
From: Kevin Dickins, Deputy City Manager, Social and Health Development
Subject: Winter Response 2022-2023 Final Report
Date: March 18, 2024

Recommendation

That, on the recommendation of the Deputy City Manager, Social and Health Development, that the following "Winter Response 2022-2023 Final Report" **BE RECEIVED** for information purposes.

Executive Summary

This report provides a final summary of the actions taken as part of the 2022-23 Winter Response in support of the City's Most Marginalized Community Action and Accountability Table (Community Action & Accountability Table). The response included the identification of increased basic needs and drop-in services for those living unsheltered for the 2022-23 winter months and beyond. This report is inclusive of the Immediate Action to Support the Action and Accountability Working Group working groups recommended proposals to civic administration in support of the funding allocations and subsequent council approved reallocation of funds to maintain or enhance service levels for marginalized Londoners. The utilization of remaining unspent funds assisted in supporting those experiencing homelessness while helping to bridge supports whilst the Whole of Community System Response worked to implement the first community hubs.

Linkage to the Corporate Strategic Plan

2019-2023 Strategic Plan for the City of London

The City of London identifies 'Strengthening Our Community' and 'Building a Sustainable City' as strategic areas of focus.

Londoners have access to the supports they need to be successful.

Londoners have access to the services and supports that promote well-being, health, and safety in their neighborhoods and across the city.

Housing Stability for All: The Housing Stability Action Plan for the City of London (2019-2024)

London's Homeless Prevention and Housing Plan, Housing Stability for All: The Housing Stability Action Plan for the City of London (Housing Stability for All Plan), is the approved guiding document for homeless prevention and housing in the City of London and was developed in consultation with Londoners.

Analysis

1.0 Background Information

1.1 Previous Reports Related to this Matter:

- Winter Response Program Outcome Report year-over-year Comparison (CPSC: August 15, 2023)
- 2022-2023 Winter Response Program Outcome Report (CPSC: May 24, 2023)
- 2022-2023 Winter Response and Community Accountability Working Group Funding Reallocation Request (CPSC: April 12, 2023)
- 2022-2023 Winter Response Program and Action and Accountability Working Group Update (CPSC: November 29, 2022)
- City of London 2021-2022 Winter Response Program for Unsheltered Individuals (CPSC: April 20, 2022)

- City of London 2020-2021 Winter Response Program for Unsheltered Individuals (November 2, 2021)
- Update – City of London 2020-2021 Winter Response Program For Unsheltered Individuals (CPSC: April 20, 2021)
- City of London 2020-2021 Winter Response Program for Unsheltered Individuals (CPSC: December 1, 2020)
- Municipal Council Approval of The Housing Stability Plan 2019 to 2024 as Required Under the Housing Services Act, 2011 (CPSC: December 3, 2019)

2.0 Discussion and Considerations

2.1 Background

The 2022-2023 Winter Response was a fully community led response as per the outcomes of community discussions following the demonstration in the summer of 2022, which led to the creation of the Community Action & Accountability Table. To support the continued increase in both numbers and desperation of individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness and to prevent more deaths on the street, the concentrated focus for an increase in basic needs provisions and drop-in spaces was needed to bring the community in out of the cold during the coldest winter months. An overall collaborative approach to unify support through the winter months was applied which provided several positive interactions and supports for those at greatest risk due to cold weather. London Cares, in partnership with Unity Project, Atlohsa Family Healing Services, The Salvation Army Centre of Hope (TSACOH), and Canadian Mental Health Association Thames Valley (CMHA), collaborated on the expanded and coordinated winter response for London's unsheltered population. A human rights-based approach to providing basic needs was taken and included the provision of food, showers, laundry, and other essential services as well as 24/7 drop in spaces in various locations across the city.

A cross-agency effort helped ensure more support and better access to marginalized Londoners, keeping them safer and sheltered during the winter. The coordinated solution was built upon actions already underway by multiple agencies, including encampment support and outreach, cultural safety, trauma informed and harm reduction approaches, outreach coordination to reach more people and identify resource gaps, and the provision of basic needs including hygiene essentials, food and water to showers and laundry.

Elements of winter response built on existing resources with enhancements. Temporary shelter options included spaces for couples and pets, for women and non-binary individuals, and for Indigenous community members. Daytime and overnight resting and drop-in spaces provided additional resources for cold weather alert periods.

A reallocation of unspent funds was approved by council in April 2023 after the initial community led winter response reported an anticipated underspending in quarter 1 due to several contributing factors including delays in hiring staff, finding space, etc. Additional day drop in space through London Cares, extended hours at CMHA Coffee House and additional shelter beds, showers through The Salvation Army Centre of Hope were added as supplementary community supports for an extended community winter response.

3.0 Financial Impact

The total amount of funding allocated and approved for Winter Response 2022-2023 was up to \$5,000,000 through allocated provincial Social Services Relief Funds Phase 5 and remaining provincial Homelessness Prevention Program funding, federal Reaching Home COVID response funding, and municipal funding from the Housing Stability Services base budget.

Unlike previous Winter Responses, this response was led by the Community Action & Accountability Table and included several programs with 4 month, one and two-year schedules from the onset. For example, Atlohsa's Wiigiwaaminaan program was funded for two years, and The Salvation Army Centre of Hope showers and women only shelter beds, London Cares Hub and additional outreach, training and resting spaces were funded for one year with funding for a number of other basic needs and shelter beds funded for 4 months.

As noted, the Winter Response services from December 1, 2022, to November 30, 2023, were allocated a total of \$5,000,000 and specific details of the allocated, budgeted and actuals are shown in Schedule 1.

Initial unspent dollars (\$303,275) were recommended for reallocation by civic administration and approved by Council on April 25, 2023. This funding extended a number of community services through to the end of June 2023, at which time the Encampment Strategy Table within the Health & Homelessness Whole of Community System Response took on the responsibility of planning and operating the 2023-2024 Cold Weather Response as well as identifying a depot program to support unsheltered individuals in encampments with human rights basic needs provision from July through November 2023.

The total cost of the original Winter Response 2022 -2023, (this total does not include the depot costs), was a total of \$3,948,576. The Year 2 funding for Wiigiwaaminaan was reallocated as part of the 2023-24 Cold Weather Response. The remaining \$137,749 identified surplus will be recouped and utilized within the HSS 2024-25 budget.

Attached as Schedule 1: Housing Stability Services - 2022-2023 Winter Response Services.

Financial Impacts Outcomes

*** Atlohsa Family Healing Services Year 1 Actuals are still being reported on, this figure is estimated.*

Conclusion

In planning for the winter response 2022-23, the number of individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness and their level of desperation had reached an untenable state. Homelessness numbers had almost doubled since the first winter response. The need to provide individuals with options to get in out of the cold, support basic needs and a more holistic support model was identified by the Community Action & Accountability Table and supported by civic administration as paramount to the response. The Community Action & Accountability Table collaborated on a commitment to offer flexible service models that supported the maximum number of individuals experiencing homelessness to get in out of the cold until the whole of community system response was able to hold summits and establish the response framework that was approved by council in March of 2023.

The work of the Whole of Community System Response through the creation of an encampment strategy that addresses longer term supports, should reduce, and eventually eliminate the need to create one-off temporary measures, however as this work continues to unfold, the Encampment Implementation Table administered the 2023-24 Cold Weather Response and is actively supporting it now.

Prepared by: Debbie Kramers, Manager, Coordinated Informed Response
Submitted by: Craig Cooper, Director, Housing Stability Services
Recommended by: Kevin Dickins, Deputy City Manager, Social and Health Development

Schedule 1:

Housing Stability Services 2022-2023 Winter Response Services
Financial Impacts

Agencies	Period	Allocated	Budget	Actuals	Variance
London Cares	December 1, 2022 – November 30, 2023	\$3,132,175	\$2,828,900	\$2,691,151	\$137,749
Salvation Army (COH)	December 1, 2022 – November 30, 2023	\$398,725	\$398,725	\$398,725	\$0
Athlosa	December 1, 2022 – November 30, 2024	\$1,310,400	Y1: \$700,000 Y2: \$610,400	**\$700,000	\$610,400
Unity	December 1, 2022 – March 31, 2023	\$90,150	\$90,150	\$90,150	\$0
CMHA	December 1, 2022– November 30, 2023	\$68,550	\$68,550	\$68,550	\$0
Totals	Winter Response	\$5,000,000	\$4,696,725	\$3,948,576	\$748,149

Reallocation April 2023 (\$303,275)					
London Cares	April 1-June 30, 2023	\$92,500	\$92,500	\$92,384	\$116
CMHA	April 1-June 30 2023	\$85,750	\$85,750	\$85,750	\$0
TSACOH	April 1-June 30 2023	\$131,000	\$131,000	\$131,000	\$0
HSS Budget	April 1-June 30 2023	\$5,975	\$5,975	\$5,975	\$0
Total		\$309,000	\$309,000	\$308,884	\$116

*** Athlosa Family Healing Services Year 1 Actuals are still being reported on, this figure is estimated.*

Outcomes

Program / Service	Duration	Overseeing Agency	Services	Outcomes
Training	N/A	London Cares	Could not be actioned.	Could not be actioned
Additional Outreach Supports	1 year	London Cares	Enhanced outreach 5 days a week to areas that were challenging to access.	11,819 items of basic needs supplied (e.g. Food, water, hygiene items, winter gear).
696 Dundas St Drop-In	8 months	London Cares	Day services 7 days a week	18,060 drop ins for services

281 Wellington St. showers	1 year	The Salvation Army Centre of Hope	Drop In M/W/F for 3 hours	126 showers were provided
568 Richmond St Drop-In	4 months	London Cares	Day services 7 days a week	36,928 drop ins for services
602 Queens Ave Drop-In	1 year	London Cares	Day services 5 days a week	23,751 drop ins for services
679 Dundas St. Drop-in	8.5 months	London Cares	Day services M/W/TH 3 hours and Tues-Sat 5 hours	7,466 drop ins for services
371 Hamilton Rd. Day Drop-In	6 months	CMHA	Day services 7 days a week	17,266 drop ins for services
636 York St. Shelter bed increase	4 months	Unity Project	24/7 rooms 7 days a week	1200 shelter bed stays
448 Horton St Resting Space	1 year	London Cares	5 Day and 5 Night beds 7 days a week	2,790 resting space stays
281 Wellington St. 15 beds for women	1 year	The Salvation Army Centre of Hope	24/7 services 7 days a week	3,833 night stays
350 Queens Ave. Night Drop-In	4 months	London Cares	Night drop in beds 7 days a week	4,224 night stays
696 Dundas St. Night Drop-In	3 months	London Cares	Night drop in beds 7 days a week	2,235 night stays
679 Dundas St. Night Drop-in	8 months	London Cares	Night drop in 5 days a week	3,236 night stays
550 Wellington Rd. 24/7 space	1 year	Wiigiwaaminaan Indigenous Healing Space	24/7 services 7 days a week	6,246 shelter bed stays