

WRITTEN SUBMISSION TO:

Community and Protective Services (CPS) Committee

City of London • Meeting of April 13, 2026

Re: Agenda Item 4.2 — Report Back: Basic Needs and Pathway Options Feasibility of Contract Extension – 519Pursuit Umbrella Relief Programs Inc.

Submitted by: **Sarah Campbell**, Executive Director, and the Board of Directors of Ark Aid Street Mission

Date of Submission: April 10, 2026

ON BEHALF OF ARK AID STREET MISSION AND OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Ark Aid Street Mission respectfully submits this written delegation in response to Agenda Item 4.2 before the Community and Protective Services Committee on April 13, 2026. This submission is presented on behalf of Sarah Campbell, Executive Director, and the Board of Directors of Ark Aid Street Mission.

We write in strong support of a contract extension for 519Pursuit Umbrella Relief Programs Inc. and, more broadly, in support of a service continuity and stabilization framework that ensures all organizations previously funded through the Unsheltered Homelessness and Encampments Initiative (UHEI) can maintain operations during the transition period while new federal-municipal funding agreements are secured.

We do so as an organization that has itself navigated the direct consequences of UHEI funding expiry — having lost over \$1 million in core funding effective April 1, 2026 — and as a longstanding partner in London’s homelessness response system. We understand precisely what is at stake when these services are interrupted, and we are committed to working collaboratively across our sector to ensure that does not happen.

A CRITICAL AND TIMELY FEDERAL SIGNAL: THE UHEI RENEWAL

On **April 1, 2026** — the same day that UHEI funding expired for London’s front-line organizations — the Government of Canada announced a **\$125 million national extension of the Unsheltered Homelessness and Encampments Initiative (UHEI)**, administered by Housing, Infrastructure and Communities Canada under Minister Gregor Robertson.

“Far too many people in Canada are living without a safe and stable place to call home. With this funding, we are ensuring communities can continue to access the resources they need to expand housing options and help people move into safer, more stable housing.”—
The Honourable Gregor Robertson, Minister of Housing and Infrastructure, April 1, 2026

This announcement is not peripheral context. It is a direct and unambiguous federal statement that the services funded under UHEI — outreach, encampment engagement, basic needs provision, transitional housing support, and case management — are recognized as essential, effective, and worthy of sustained national investment.

The previous UHEI agreement between the Government of Canada and the City of London, signed December 2024, provided \$5 million in federal funding matched by \$6.4 million from the City over two years. That agreement supported \$6.8 million in services flowing to London organizations including 519Pursuit, Ark Aid, London Cares, Atlohsa, and others. That agreement has now expired.

A new London-specific agreement under the renewed UHEI must be negotiated and executed. That process takes time. **The people living unsheltered and unhoused in our city do not have time.** We are asking this Committee to act as the bridge.

WHAT IS AT STAKE: THE SERVICES THAT HOLD THE SYSTEM TOGETHER

The services provided by 519Pursuit and by UHEI-funded organizations and particularly Ark Aid Street Mission are not supplementary to the homelessness response system. They are its foundation. They provide:

- ❖ **Assessment and triage** — the critical first point of contact for individuals in crisis, identifying need and connecting people to the right pathway
- ❖ **Basic needs provision** — food, clothing, hygiene, and immediate relief delivered without barrier or condition
- ❖ **Stabilization and relationship building** — the sustained human connection that makes every other intervention possible
- ❖ **System diversion** — proactive engagement that redirects individuals away from emergency rooms, police interactions, and preventable crisis
- ❖ **System navigation** — active support helping individuals access health care, mental health services, addiction supports, income, and housing
- ❖ **Initiating a pathway towards home** — housing readiness, family reunification, return-to-community connections, and the work of transitioning people from unsheltered crisis to stability

When any one of these functions is interrupted, the consequences cascade through every other part of the system. Emergency departments absorb the overflow. Police and EMS respond without appropriate diversion resources. Encampments grow. People who were moving toward housing stability lose momentum and connection. Lives are lost.

The City of London's own data is unambiguous: approximately **2,000 people** are actively experiencing homelessness in London in 2025, with numbers expected to increase this spring. **44 per cent** require high levels of support to exit homelessness. More than **7,000 people** are on the community housing waitlist. Western University's Centre for Research on Health Equity and Social Inclusion estimates the annual cost of homelessness to the system at over **\$100,000 per person** — including emergency services, healthcare, and justice. Continuity of these services is not a charitable investment. It is a fiscally responsible one.

OUR ASK: SERVICE CONTINUITY WHILE AGREEMENTS ARE SECURED

Ark Aid Street Mission, on behalf of itself and in alignment with its partners across London's homelessness response sector, makes the following specific requests of the Community and Protective Services Committee:

- 1. Support the contract extension for 519Pursuit Umbrella Relief Programs Inc.** — as a direct, immediate investment in the continuity of UHEI-eligible services that are actively keeping people safe and connected to the pathway towards home.
- 2. Direct Civic Administration to develop and implement a service continuity and stabilization framework** — one that authorizes the flow of stabilization funds to all organizations previously funded through UHEI, maintaining essential services during the period

between the expiry of the previous agreement and the execution of a new federal-municipal UHEI agreement under the renewed \$125 million national initiative.

3. Engage proactively with the federal government — to expedite the negotiation and execution of a new London-specific UHEI agreement, so that sustained federal funding flows to London’s front-line organizations as quickly as possible and does not remain inaccessible to communities while agreements are processed.

We wish to be clear: this is not a request for new funding in the abstract. It is a request that the City of London use its existing authority, its demonstrated commitment to this work, and its established relationship with the federal government to prevent a service collapse that will cost more — in human suffering and downstream system costs — than the stabilization investment required to avoid it.

A CALL TO THE PROVINCE: MATCH THIS FEDERAL INVESTMENT

We would be remiss in this submission not to name directly the significant gap in provincial support for London’s homelessness response.

Ontario is one of **only two provinces in Canada** that did not match UHEI funding in the previous agreement cycle. While the provincial government has pointed to its \$21 million Homelessness Prevention Program allocation to London, front-line organizations and City Councillors have consistently noted that this funding does not replace the UHEI-funded services that have now expired.

The renewed federal commitment of \$125 million represents the clearest possible signal from the Government of Canada: this work matters, this model works, and communities need sustained support to deliver it. The Province of Ontario has an opportunity — and, we submit, an obligation — to match and exponentially expand the impact of this federal investment.

London’s homelessness crisis is not a London-made problem. It is the product of decades of insufficient investment in affordable housing, mental health and addiction services, and social supports at the provincial and federal levels. The organizations serving Londoners living unsheltered and unhoused are delivering life-saving services in the gap left by those systemic failures. They cannot continue to do so without provincial co-investment proportionate to the scale of the need.

We call on this Committee, and on London’s elected provincial representatives, to make explicit, public, and persistent representation to Queen’s Park — calling on the Province to match the federal UHEI renewal, to expedite the flow of those funds to London, and to recognize that the support of people living unsheltered and unhoused in their path to health, recovery, housing stability, and home is a provincial responsibility that cannot be downloaded to municipalities and community organizations alone.

OUR COMMITMENT: COLLABORATIVE, RESPONSIVE, LIFE-SAVING SERVICES

Ark Aid Street Mission is not stepping away from this work. We are actively planning a year-round, responsive model that includes expanded outreach and encampment support, housing stabilization programming, and the capacity to scale emergency services during periods of heightened need. We are committed to doing this work in alignment with our partners across London’s homelessness sector.

We have reached out to colleagues across the sector — to align our voices around the following shared commitments:

- ❖ **Collective support for the federal UHEI renewal** as a signal that must be acted upon quickly at the local level
- ❖ **Coordinated advocacy to City Council** for service continuity and stabilization funding while new agreements are executed
- ❖ **Unified advocacy to the Province of Ontario** to match and expedite UHEI funding in favour of those living unsheltered and unhoused
- ❖ **A shared commitment to adaptive, collaborative service delivery** that responds to the changing dynamics and challenges of homelessness in our community

The people we collectively serve — those living unsheltered and unhoused on London’s streets, in encampments, in hidden homelessness — are not abstractions. They are our neighbours, and they are depending on this system to hold while better solutions are built. We are asking this Committee to help it hold.

CLOSING

Ark Aid Street Mission and its Board of Directors are grateful for the opportunity to present this submission. We commend the work of 519Pursuit and the organizations who continue to serve London’s most vulnerable residents under extraordinarily difficult circumstances. We urge the Community and Protective Services Committee to recommend the contract extension and to direct Civic Administration to act swiftly on a service continuity and stabilization framework.

The federal government has made its position clear. We are asking London’s civic administration to meet that signal with the same urgency.

Mission: *“Serving with love to provide nourishment, foster hope, and work together to create the journey home.”*

Vision: *“All people are beheld, beloved, and belong.”*

Respectfully submitted on behalf of Ark Aid Street Mission and its Board of Directors,



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