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TO:	CHAIR AND MEMBERS COMMUNITY AND PROTECTIVE SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING ON SEPTEMBER 22, 2015
FROM:	LYNNE LIVINGSTONE MANAGING DIRECTOR NEIGHBOURHOOD, CHILDREN AND FIRE SERVICES
SUBJECT:	LONDON'S HOMELESS PREVENTION SYSTEM HOUSING STABILITY BANK

RECOMMENDATION

That, on the recommendation of the Managing Director of Neighbourhood, Children and Fire Services, the following actions **BE TAKEN** with respect to the award of the contract regarding Request for Proposal (RFP) 15-37 Housing Stability Bank Services:

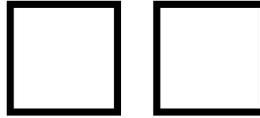
- a) that the proposal submitted by The Salvation Army Centre of Hope, 281 Wellington Street, London ON, N6B 2L4, at a fiscal budget (2016/2017) of \$2,672,496, **BE ACCEPTED**; it being noted that the bid submitted by The Salvation Army Centre of Hope was the only bid received and meets the City's terms, conditions and specifications;
- b) that the funding for this service, in the amount of up to \$3M per fiscal year **BE APPROVED**; it being noted that the funding will commence on a pro-rated basis January 1, 2016; and,
- c) that the funding approval noted in b) above is **SUBJECT TO** the ongoing funding available under the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative, City of London and other funding sources.

PREVIOUS REPORTS PERTINENT TO THIS MATTER
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- London's Homeless Prevention System: Presentation (CPSC: January 20, 2015)
- London's Homeless Prevention System Housing Stability Fund (CPSC: June 16, 2014)
- Homeless Prevention System for London Three Year Implementation Plan (CPSC: April 22, 2013)
- Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CPSC: December 17, 2012)
- Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative Funding Allocation for January 1, 2013 to March 31, 2014 (CSC: October 22, 2012)
- Elimination of Community Start-Up and Maintenance Benefit (CSC: October 22, 2012)
- Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative Homelessness Social Assistance Regulation Amendments (CSC: September 10, 2012)
- Housing Support Services (2005 and annual reports since 2007 on contracts and services of Rent Bank, THAW, and related funding)
- Provincial Consolidated Homelessness Prevention Programs (CHPP) (Annual updates and reports since 2005)
- Provincial Rent Bank Program Grant Agreement (Annual update reports and contract approvals since 2005)
- Mayor's Anti-Poverty Action Group Funding (1997 and annual Municipal Budget reports)

BACKGROUND

The purpose of this report is to recommend to the Community and Protective Services Committee that the City of London enters into a Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI) Purchase of Service Agreement for the Housing Stability Bank to be operated by The Salvation Army Centre of Hope. The Managing Director, Neighbourhood, Children and Fire Services (or designate) will execute the standard form Purchase of Service Agreement provided by By-law No. A-6955-156.



Purchasing Process

One (1) bid was received as a result of a request for proposal issued May 22, 2015. The submission was reviewed by staff from Finance and Corporate Services, Purchasing and Supply, Homeless Prevention and external reviewers to ensure compliance with the specifications, terms and conditions outlined in RFP 15-37 and the City of London Homeless Prevention System Implementation Plan.

BACKGROUND

The City of London’s Homeless Prevention System Implementation Plan is a coordinated and integrated individual and family centred Housing First approach that is outcome focused and designed to address, reduce and prevent homelessness in London. These efforts directly contribute to Council's 2015 - 2019 Strategic Plan for the City of London including strengthening our community through caring and compassionate services. Our work with community agencies helps tenants keep their existing housing and to reduce and prevent homelessness in London.

A Housing First approach assists individuals and families by seeking out the right housing, at the right place, with the right level of support to develop lasting housing stability. It is a housing and service intervention that provides immediate access to permanent housing and support services.

A key element of Housing First is assisting individuals and families at risk of, or experiencing homelessness, in their efforts to secure and maintain housing. The London Housing Stability Bank provides one of the ways in which this assistance is provided. The Housing Stability Bank offers a limited grant program and interest-free loans to assist Londoners with low income in securing and retaining housing and for those at risk of homelessness to remain housed. Eligibility criteria includes such things as meeting the income test, having a demonstrated regular source of income and being a resident of London.

HOUSING STABILITY BANK BACKGROUND

On January 1, 2013, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) introduced the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI). Consolidating homelessness related programs is a part of Ontario’s Long Term Affordable Housing Strategy and is aimed at transforming the housing and homeless prevention system through a Housing First and individual and family first approach.

On January 1, 2013, the Community Start-Up and Maintenance Benefit (CSUMB) was eliminated as a benefit under Ontario Works (OW) and the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP). This mandatory benefit was available to OW and ODSP recipients to assist in establishing a new principal residence, to prevent eviction, or the discontinuance of utilities or heating in an existing residence.

The impact of the elimination of CSUMB and the immediate gap in available funding for social assistance recipients who were experiencing, or at risk of homelessness, was considered as part of the development of London's Homeless Prevention System. While there was no obligation to provide a replacement for CSUMB, a program to support low-income Londoners, including social assistance recipients, was introduced as part of our efforts to achieve the outcomes under our homeless prevention system.

Since 2005, The Salvation Army Centre of Hope has operated a small rent bank and emergency utility program. In 2013, the program significantly expanded primarily to respond to households on social assistance. In 2014, a detailed analysis of the use of the fund revealed 68% of households were on social assistance. Despite the rental assistance program operating as a loan, there was a very small loan repayment of 13%.

Use of the Housing Stability Bank remains high. Between April 1, 2013 to March 31, 2014, 4,607 households used either one or both of the rental assistance or emergency utility assistance programs for a total cost of \$3.7M. Between April 1, 2014 and March 31, 2015, 5,079 households used either one or both of the rental assistance or emergency utility assistance programs for a total cost of \$3.7M. Of that total cost, the City of London Homeless Prevention Service Area contributed \$2.7M in 2014/2015. Reserve funds at The Salvation Army contributed to a reduction in overall costs for this reporting period.

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Led by the City of London, community consultations as well as a working group considered: the needs and interests of the program, improving the financial literacy skills of households, and developing an improved loan recovery program. Loan recovery is intended to cover the administrative costs to operate the Housing Stability Bank. The efforts to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the loan program are showing positive results further reducing the contribution by the City of London.

The City of London is the primary source of funding to the Housing Stability Bank for their loan program. Additional funders include United Way London & Middlesex - Winter Warmth Program, Ontario Hydro - Ontario's Low Income Emergency Assistance Program, City of London Water Operations, and private donations.

The Housing Stability Bank provides immediate relief to a particular household crisis without any control over broader system issues and mitigating factors that may limit the housing stability of its applicants. Issues such as income levels, rising utility costs, access to affordable housing, homelessness, mental health, addictions or trauma require an integrated multi-sectoral response.

CONCLUSION

Civic Administration will continue to work on informing and engaging Londoners in a collaborative manner to support the implementation of London's Homeless Prevention System and its actions to achieve our collective vision of strengthening our community through caring and compassionate services to address, reduce and prevent homelessness in London.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The funding for the Housing Stability Bank services is available through the Provincial Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative and Municipal contribution for up to a maximum annual commitment of \$3M per year.

SUBMITTED BY:	RECOMMENDED BY:
JAN RICHARDSON MANAGER, HOMELESS PREVENTION NEIGHBOURHOOD, CHILDREN AND FIRE SERVICES	LYNNE LIVINGSTONE MANAGING DIRECTOR NEIGHBOURHOOD, CHILDREN AND FIRE SERVICES