

Accessing Previously Earmarked Funds for Community Action on Mental Health and Addiction

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Standing Policy Committee on Community and Protective Services recommends Council authorize Administration to expend the remaining \$8 million of the previously earmarked Community Action on Mental Health and Addiction funds that were committed to support community-based programs with:

- a. Up to \$3 million being allocated in 2021 to maintain programs currently-funded through the Prevention Investment Framework with a Mental Health and Addiction lens that are demonstrating positive outcomes, and
- b. The remaining \$5 million to be invested as per the original Notice of Motion over the next three years in alignment with the Community Action on Mental Health and Addiction strategy and in accordance with existing funding processes.

HIGHLIGHTS

- This report seeks authorization to access the remaining earmarked funds for the Community Action on Mental Health and Addiction (CAMHA) that are committed to support community-based programs.
- What does this mean to Calgarians? COVID-19 delayed the completion of the Community Action on Mental Health and Addiction strategy and implementation plan but the need for preventive mental health and addiction programs is ongoing and has only increased with the isolation, financial pressures and stress associated with the pandemic.
- Why does this matter? The investment of up to \$3 million in 2021 towards existing programs that are showing positive results will prevent any service gaps and disruptions that could be created if these programs suddenly cease to operate at the end of 2020.
- Previous directions to expend the earmarked funds were granted on an annual basis. Authorizing Administration to expend the remaining earmarked funds will reduce administrative burden, cut red tape and provide flexibility to invest in community programs that are in alignment with the Community Action on Mental Health and Addiction strategy enabling timely responses to community need.
- Strategic Alignment to Council's Citizen Priorities: A city of safe and inspiring neighbourhoods
- Background and Previous Council Direction is included as Attachment 1.

DISCUSSION

In July 2018, Council earmarked \$25 million from the Fiscal Stability Reserve for Crime Prevention and the development and implementation of a new Mental Health and Addiction Strategy by 2023. Of the \$25 million, \$15 million was earmarked for community programs through the Prevention Investment Framework and the remaining \$10 million for seed funding of initiatives resulting from the strategy.

Ahead of the development of the Community Action on Mental Health and Addiction Strategic Framework, Council approved the Prevention Investment Framework with a Mental Health and

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Addiction lens (Attachment 2) in 2018 October. The investments made in community-based programs through this framework, were initially made on a one-time basis in 2019 while the Community Action on Mental Health and Addiction strategy was under development. Following the development of the Community Action on Mental Health and Addiction Strategic Framework, it was determined that the investments were aligned with the framework and funds were once again allocated in 2020 to the programs that were demonstrating positive outcomes and results.

It was expected that the investments for 2021 would be made in alignment with the implementation of the Community Action on Mental Health and Addiction strategy. However, due to COVID-19, the completion of the strategy has been delayed until Q2 2021. Even in the absence of the full strategy, it is important to maintain investment in the community-based programs that are demonstrating results as the compounding impact of the pandemic on mental health is clear.

The most recent 2020 Citizen's Perspective Survey Report found a higher proportion of Calgarians perceive COVID-19 as a greater threat to their mental health than their physical health; 25 percent reported their mental health has worsened. The Distress Centre has been fielding an increase in calls since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, with almost 25 percent more suicide related calls up to mid-August 2020 compared to the same time period last year. As well, 95 people died from unintentional opioid poisoning in Calgary from April to June 2020, which is more than double the number of people (45) who died from unintentional opioid poisoning in the first quarter of 2020.

This demonstrates continued demand for prevention programs with a mental health and addiction lens. Since the funding framework (Attachment 2), evaluation plans and earmarked funds are already in place, approving this recommendation will allow Administration to invest in programs that are showing positive outcomes while the Community-based Stewardship Group and other partners finalize the upcoming strategy and implementation plans.

The 18 programs that would be considered for funding in 2021 were funded in 2020. A list of the funded programs is included as Attachment 3. These programs provide support to Calgarians experiencing vulnerabilities leading to mental health and addictions issues. The remaining \$5 million would be invested as per the original Notice of Motion (i.e. the Community Services Prevention Investment Framework, The City's necessary FCSS contributions, and other short term initiatives in areas, such as Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) over the next three years in alignment with the Community Action on Mental Health and Addiction strategy, and in accordance with existing funding processes.

Next Steps:

Funding for 2021 will be made available for the programs currently funded through the Prevention Investment Framework with a Mental Health and Addiction lens (Attachment 3) that continue to demonstrate progress and positive outcomes. Funding decisions will be based on year-end reports, financial reports and information gathered as part of Administration's ongoing partnership with each organization. Final allocations will be approved by appropriate signing authorities within Administration.

Future funding will be made available for new and existing programs in alignment with the implementation of the Community Action on Mental Health and Addiction strategy for the next three years.

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STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION (EXTERNAL)

- Public Engagement was undertaken
- Public Communication or Engagement was not required
- Public/Stakeholders were informed
- Stakeholder dialogue/relations were undertaken

IMPLICATIONS

Social

Mental health and addiction issues result in social costs for individuals, families, and communities. Timely access to approved funds allows Administration, other orders of government and community partners to continue to work together to respond to Calgarians through programs that adhere to the Prevention Investment Framework with a Mental Health and Addiction lens.

Environmental

Not applicable.

Economic

Mental health and addiction issues result in economic costs for individuals, families, and communities. Efficient access to funds that invest in prevention programs with a mental health and addiction lens can reduce costs associated with social disorder issues and spending on touch points to the justice system and related social services. In addition, investments that increase Calgarians' wellbeing and resiliency will contribute to a healthy workforce that is required to relaunch and rebuild the economy.

Service and Financial Implications

No anticipated financial impact to The Corporation

There are no operating budget requests associated with this report therefore there is no financial impact to The Corporation. Funds were previously earmarked through the Fiscal Stability Reserve in 2018. Approving Administration to expend the remaining funds in alignment with the Prevention Investment Framework with a Mental Health and Addiction lens, supports Council's priority of a well-run city. It also prevents transactional delays that may result in service disruptions to programs that promote safe and inspiring neighbourhoods and a prosperous city.

RISK

There is a risk of providing continued funding to programs if they are not effective. To mitigate this risk, distribution of funds and adherence to contracts are carefully assessed by Administration informed by continuous evaluation of financial and year-end reports against intended program goals.

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SPC on Community and Protective Services
2020 October 14**

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ATTACHMENTS

1. Background and Previous Council Direction
2. Prevention Investment Framework with a Mental Health and Addiction lens
3. 2020 Programs funded through the Prevention Investment Framework with a MHA lens

Department Circulation

General Manager	Department	Approve/Consult/Inform
Not applicable		