
REPORT TITLE: **COVID-19 Emergency Funding Update**

FROM: Janice Sheehy, Commissioner of Human Services

RECOMMENDATION

That the 2021 Housing Support gross revenues and expenditures be increased by \$27,150,338 as a result of additional provincial Social Services Relief Funds, Ontario Isolation Centres Initiative funding and Mental Health and Addiction Funding;

And further, that the 2021 Income Support gross revenues and expenditures be increased by \$200,000 as a result of additional provincial funding under the Temporary COVID-19 Isolation Emergency Supports Fund.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- The Region of Peel (Region) has received \$13,125,392 of emergency COVID-19 funding for the homeless from the federal government, through the Reaching Home program.
- The Region has received \$32,621,626 of COVID-19 emergency funding including Social Services Relief Funding, for the vulnerable from the provincial government.
- These funds for the homeless and other vulnerable populations have supported the Region's COVID-19 response. The funds were also allocated to over 80 agencies, which together have assisted over 200,000 Peel residents throughout the pandemic.
- The Region has also received \$21,168,000 from the provincial government through the Ontario Isolation Centre Initiative.
- Under the Ontario Isolation Centre Initiative, the Region was funded to create up to 840 new rooms for individuals and families to safely self-isolate during the pandemic; to date 263 rooms have been opened at 3 isolation sites.

DISCUSSION

1. Background

Throughout 2020, Regional Council was advised of COVID-19 emergency funding allocated to the Region under the federal government's Reaching Home program and the provincial government's Social Services Relief Fund (SSRF).

On January 14, 2021 Regional Council was advised of the Region of Peel's Phase Two Social Services Relief Fund allocation of \$5,669,000 and the new allocation of \$21,168,000 under the Ontario Isolation Centres Initiative.

On January 28, 2021, Regional Council was advised that the province allocated one-time funding of \$313,338 to the Region of Peel for mental health and addictions supports for the vulnerable, and \$200,000 of funding under the province's temporary COVID-19 Isolation Emergency Support Fund.

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Most recently, on March 10, 2021, the Regional Chair received a letter from the province that renewed Social Services Relief Fund (Phase Three) funding has been approved for the Region of Peel in the amount of \$10,703,506 for the period of March 1, 2021 – December 31, 2021.

The table below lists all allocations received to date.

COVID Emergency Funds Allocated to Peel	
Federal Government	
Reaching Home	\$13,125,392
Total Federal Funding	\$13,125,392
Provincial Government	
Social Services Relief Fund*	\$32,108,288
One-time Mental Health and Addictions Support	\$313,338
Isolation Emergency Support Fund	\$200,000
Provincial Funding for the vulnerable	\$32,621,626
Ontario Isolation Centre Initiative	\$21,168,000
Total Provincial Funding	\$53,789,626

*Includes Phase Two and Three Social Services Relief Fund allocations

This report provides Regional Council with an update on how funds have been committed and/or spent to March 31, 2021.

2. Federal Reaching Home COVID-19 Funding

As of the end of December 2020, the total allocation of Reaching Home COVID-19 emergency funding of \$13.1 million has been fully committed, with \$10.6 million spent. These funds have been used to support the Region's COVID-19 response for the homeless, which includes funding to 23 community agencies.

The table in Appendix I provides details about how these funds have been spent and/or committed as of March 31, 2021.

The federal government has extended the deadline for use of allocated funds to June 30, 2021.

3. Provincial Emergency COVID-19 Funding

a) Social Services Relief Fund

As of the end of December 2020, the \$21.4 million SSRF allocation (Phases One and Two) has been fully committed, with \$13.1 million spent. These funds have been used to support the Region's COVID-19 response for the homeless and other vulnerable populations. This includes funding to 73 community agencies.

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The table in Appendix II summarizes how funding has been committed and/or spent as at March 31, 2021.

Staff will return to Regional Council to outline how the SSRF Phase Three allocation will be used to support the Region's COVID-19 response.

Together, the federal Reaching Home and provincial SSRF emergency COVID-19 funds for the homeless and other vulnerable populations have assisted over 200,000 Peel residents throughout the pandemic.

b) One-Time Mental Health & Addictions Funding

On January 28, 2021 Regional Council was informed that the Region of Peel has been allocated one-time funding of \$313,338 from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

This one-time funding distributed to Service Managers in Ontario is designed to assist with the costs related to the provision of mental health and addictions supports during the pandemic. This funding must be used by March 31, 2021.

Similar to the province's SSRF and the funding under the Ontario Isolation Centres Initiative, this funding flows through the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative administered by Housing Services.

This funding will be used to offset Regional funding that has been used for the outreach program for the homeless. The Regional funding will then be repurposed to extend some mental health and harm reduction services that have been funded with temporary provincial and/or federal funding.

c) Temporary COVID Isolation Emergency Support Fund

The Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services has allocated the Region with \$200,000 to support the provision of emergency financial assistance to individuals who are awaiting test results, identified as COVID-19 positive, and/or who are required to self-isolate due to COVID-19. The funding is intended to support individuals who do not qualify for other social assistance programs and other federal or provincial income assistance, and for whom financial hardship poses a direct barrier to COVID-19 testing or completing a required period of isolation. The funding period is from December 1, 2020 to March 31, 2021.

In addition, the Region is collaborating with five designated "High Priority Strategy Lead" community agencies to connect individuals and families with available supports and emergency financial assistance, so they can isolate safely at home, or at a community isolation centre.

d) Ontario Isolation Centre Initiative

On January 14, 2021 Council was informed that the Region of Peel received an allocation of \$21,168,000 under the new Ontario Isolation Centres Initiative.

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This funding has been provided to establish up to 840 rooms in new isolation centres to help those in high-priority communities who have been significantly impacted by COVID-19.

Similar to the province's Social Services Relief Fund funding, the Ontario Isolation Centres Initiative flows through the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative administered by Housing Services.

To date, 3 isolation sites have been opened, providing 263 rooms. These rooms are in addition to the isolation and recovery site for the homeless that has been operating since March 2020.

RISK CONSIDERATIONS

COVID-19 funding from both the federal and provincial government has greatly assisted the Region of Peel and our community agencies to protect and support the homeless and other vulnerable residents throughout the pandemic.

At the time of writing this report, the federal government has not advised the Region of Peel as to whether additional COVID-19 emergency funding for the homeless and other vulnerable populations will be allocated beyond June 30, 2021. Advocacy to the federal government continues.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Human Services has received \$21,168,000 from the province for the Ontario Isolation Centre Initiative, \$5,669,000 through the Social Services Relief Fund, \$313,338 for one-time mental health and addictions funding for the vulnerable and \$200,000 for emergency financial assistance.

The 2021 Housing Support gross expenditures and revenues will be increased by \$27,150,338 due to this additional provincial funding and the 2021 Income Support gross expenditures and revenue will be increased by \$200,000. Like other COVID-19 related funding received in Human Services, the funding announcements require equal amounts of expenditure and have no net impact on the 2021 Budget.

CONCLUSION

This report provides Regional Council with an update on how the emergency COVID-19 funds received from the federal and provincial governments have been committed and/or spent up until March 31, 2021.

APPENDICES

Appendix I – Reaching Home Funding and Funded Agencies

Appendix II – Social Services Relief Fund Funding and Funded Agencies

COVID-19 Emergency Funding Update

For further information regarding this report, please contact Aileen Baird, Director, Housing Services, Ext. #1898, aileen.baird@peelregion.ca

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Reviewed and/or approved in workflow by:

Department Commissioner, Division Director, Financial Support Unit and Legal Services.