
For Information

REPORT TITLE: **Community Agencies in Receipt of COVID-19 Funding**

FROM: Janice Sheehy, Commissioner of Human Services
 Cathy Granger, Acting Commissioner of Health Services

OBJECTIVE

To provide Regional Council with an outline of the process for determining eligibility under the COVID-19 fund, a list of community agencies that have received funding, and the purpose for which the funds were used.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- To support and address emerging COVID-19 issues affecting Peel's at-risk populations, a regional Community Response Table was convened with representation from more than 90 community agencies, not-for-profits and the local municipalities.
 - Through that Table, it was identified that funding was required to support community agencies to meet the urgent needs of vulnerable people in Peel.
 - On March 26, 2020, Regional Council approved \$1,000,000 in regional funding through the Community Investment Program, to establish a COVID-19 Emergency Fund.
 - On April 9, 2020, Regional Council approved a motion to authorize staff to process applications beyond the initial \$1,000,000 allocation and not solely on a one-time basis.
 - On April 23, 2020 Regional Council granted staff the authority to enter into agreements with the Federal and Provincial governments to administer \$11,835,021 of funding as per the program directives and in response to local needs.
 - To reflect both the broader scope of programs and services that are eligible under this new funding, and a move away from only addressing urgent priorities, the COVID-19 Emergency Fund has been renamed the COVID-19 Community Fund.
 - As of May 8, 2020, the COVID-19 Community Fund has provided \$1,216,533 in funding to 65 agencies.
 - To date, Peel not-for-profits have responded to the immediate impacts of COVID-19 by utilizing the funding to increase critical staffing levels and adapt their service delivery models so that the most vulnerable populations have access to the necessities of life.
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DISCUSSION

1. Background

Region's Response to Support Community Agencies During COVID-19

To address emerging COVID-19 issues for Peel's vulnerable populations, a regional Community Response table was established with more than 90 diverse human and health service community agencies, not-for-profits and representation from the local municipalities.

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The objective of the Table is to identify and respond to emerging needs, and to convene and coordinate information sharing of community resources during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Seventy-nine per cent of Peel not-for-profits and community agencies surveyed identified that their organizations are facing immediate program closures, decreases in revenue, increased demand for support from vulnerable clients, and the need to adapt services to an online platform to sustain continuity of programs and services.

To further support Peel's vulnerable populations and address immediate community impacts faced by the not-for-profit sector, the COVID-19 Emergency Fund was established. On March 26, 2020 in a report titled "Supporting the Region of Peel's Community Agencies During the COVID-19 Pandemic", Regional Council approved \$1,000,000 in regional funding through the Community Investment Program to establish a COVID-19 Emergency Fund.

The emergency funding was designed to issue one-time grants to support agencies in the provision of services focused on the necessities of life. In the March 26 report, staff committed to returning to Council with an outline of the process for determining eligibility, a list of community agencies that have received funding, and the purpose for which the funds were used. This report fulfills the commitment.

Given the subsequent demand on the fund, Regional Council approved a motion (Resolution 2020-295) on April 9, 2020 that gave the Commissioner of Human Services the authority to continue to process applications beyond the \$1,000,000 allocation and not solely on a one-time basis.

On April 23, 2020, in a report titled "COVID-19 Funding for the Most Vulnerable – Responding to the Immediate Needs of the Community", Regional Council granted staff the authority to administer \$11,835,021 in Federal and Provincial Funding to respond to local needs. These needs include, but are not limited to, implementing regionally led programs directed to the homeless and continuing to issue grants to community agencies to support vulnerable people.

To reflect both the broader scope of programs and services that are eligible under the Federal and Provincial funding, and the move away from only addressing urgent priorities, the COVID-19 Emergency Fund has been renamed the COVID-19 Community Fund. Applications from the not-for-profit sector will continue to be received through peelregion.ca.

As of May 8, 2020, the Region has received 87 applications requesting \$4,943,005 in funding support. To date, 65 of the applications have been approved totaling \$1,216,533 in funding. A list of organizations and the funding amount granted is attached as Appendix I.

a) Eligibility for Funding Process

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the needs of the vulnerable are being met through the efforts of many community agencies, including those under contract with the Region of Peel. The emergency funding that was allocated to Peel from the Federal and Provincial governments is being used to pay for Region-led initiatives such as the Isolation and Recovery Programs for the homeless, as well as eligible expenses received from community agencies through the application process.

To be eligible for funding, a community agency must be a not-for profit that is incorporated, located in the Region of Peel and serve vulnerable residents. The vulnerable groups include but are not limited to; seniors, low-income populations, people

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experiencing poverty, victims/survivors of domestic violence, at-risk youth, women, families, children, LGBTQ2S+, persons with physical disabilities or mobility challenges, newcomers and refugees, indigenous populations and the homeless and precariously housed.

Not-for-profits can use the funding towards costs that stabilize operations affected by COVID-19, unbudgeted expenses that support the development of online service delivery models, and the immediate necessities of life for vulnerable Peel residents.

b) Approval and Distribution of Funds

All applications received are evaluated and scored against the funding directives and eligible expenses provided by the Federal and Provincial governments, and against program criteria and objectives. Applications are ranked as urgent, medium or low depending on the agency's cash flow and funding need. Approved applications are targeted to be funded within 3 to 7 business days.

2. COVID-19 Funding Analysis

COVID-19 funding has enabled Peel's not-for-profit sector to build resiliency and strengthen agility to provide urgent supports to cope during the pandemic. Of the 65 not-for-profits provided funding to date the following service sectors were supported:

Peel's Service Sector	Percentage
Food security	29%
Services for families, children and youth at-risk	17%
Health and Multiservice agencies	14%
Services for women and victims/survivors of domestic violence	12%
Services for those precariously housed and the homeless population	12%
Services for vulnerable older adults and those with physical and/or intellectual disabilities	10%
Services for Newcomers	3%
Volunteer Programming	3%

To be responsive to Peel's urgent community needs during the pandemic, 78 per cent of the COVID-19 funding supported:

- the immediate needs of low income and vulnerable clients including access to food, hygiene and other basics.
- 4-8 weeks of direct service delivery due to the economic impact faced by not-for-profits during COVID-19.

This immediate funding supported items such as, meal cards, food hampers, water, cleaning supplies, hygiene and toiletry kits, diapers and formula. As face to face frontline delivery shifted to online and phone supports, 22 per cent of COVID-19 funding supported information technology and operational costs for not-for-profits to adapt service delivery due to program closures and increased service demands.

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3. Proposed Direction

The Community Response Table continues to work with Peel Region's not-for-profit and community sector to identify, collaborate and coordinate information about community impacts and resourcing in relation to COVID-19.

In addition, the Region of Peel is working in collaboration with its local municipalities, the United Way Greater Toronto, Provincial and Federal funders, Foundations and other Regional Community Investment Programs (City of Toronto, Hamilton, Halton, York, Durham) to collectively respond to the post pandemic recovery phase of COVID-19. Biweekly the Region convenes the COVID-19 Peel Funding Consortium, a previously established group, that has been temporarily repurposed to focus on the affects of the pandemic. The objective is to share best practices, key messaging, resources, funding supports, urgent contingency planning and discuss collectively how best to support vulnerable populations during the post pandemic recovery.

A post pandemic recovery survey will be administered to identify medium and long-term COVID-19 financial impacts faced by Peel's diverse not-for-profit sector. The release of the 2020 Community Investment funding will be reviewed and aligned to best support Peel's not-for-profit sector through post pandemic recovery and rebuild strategies.

Council will continue to be kept apprised of the recommended supports required and the work that will be undertaken to assist community agencies to deal with the medium and longer-term impacts of COVID-19.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

As applications are received, they will be assessed against the directives set by the Provincial and Federal governments, to maximize this funding first, with the regional funding being used for applications that do not meet the directives.

Staff will keep Council apprised of how the funding is being allocated, through the Chief Financial Officer's monthly updates on the management of the financial impacts of COVID-19 and through the regular triannual reporting process.

CONCLUSION

Peel's not-for-profit sector has demonstrated resilience by providing essential programs and services to vulnerable populations during this pandemic. As the Region of Peel continues to support its most vulnerable residents to have access to high quality social services and programs, funding will be aligned with the medium and long-term mitigation measures designed to address the impacts of COVID-19.

APPENDICES

Appendix I - COVID-19 Community Fund Distribution

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For further information regarding this report, please contact Sonia Pace, Director, Community Partnerships, 416-844-4411, sonia.pace@peelregion.ca.

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Reviewed and/or approved in workflow by:

Department Commissioners, Division Directors and Financial Support Unit.

Final approval is by the Chief Administrative Officer.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Nancy Polsinelli". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

N. Polsinelli, Interim Chief Administrative Officer