



ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Report Date: July 7, 2015
Contact: Jim de Hoop
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Meeting Date: July 21, 2015

TO: Vancouver City Council

FROM: Acting General Manager of Community Services, in consultation with the Chief Housing Officer

SUBJECT: 2015 Homelessness Action Week (HAW) Grants

RECOMMENDATION

- A. THAT Council champion Vancouver's 2015 Homelessness Action Week by supporting neighbourhood-based responses to homelessness.
- B. THAT Council approve an allocation of \$43,000 in grants as outlined in Appendix A to create awareness about and engage citizens on solutions to homelessness through a variety of events during Homelessness Action Week (October 11-17, 2015) and throughout the year; source of funds to be the 2015 Community Services Operating Budget - Street Homelessness.
- C. THAT Council direct staff to report back by September 30, 2015 to proclaim HAW 2015 and to showcase actions and events being planned.

REPORT SUMMARY

The 2015 Homelessness Action Week (HAW) is the 10th annual Metro Vancouver campaign aimed at raising awareness about and building local capacity for solutions to homelessness. This report recommends that the City support 18 community organizations to host events during HAW and throughout the year to promote HAW and connections with their local homeless populations. The \$43,000 in grants will come from the 2015 Community Services Operating Budget - Street Homelessness.

COUNCIL AUTHORITY/PREVIOUS DECISIONS

On July 28, 2011, Council endorsed the Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2012-2021 which includes three strategic directions:

1. Increase the supply of affordable housing;
2. Encourage a housing mix across all neighbourhoods that enhances quality of life; and
3. Provide strong leadership and support partners to enhance housing stability.

The 3-Year Action Plan 2012-2014 identifies priority actions to achieve some of the Strategy's goals. The priority actions that relate to this grant request are to enhance housing stability and improve the health, safety, food security and social supports for the homeless and those at risk.

The Vancouver Charter requires a resolution passed by eight affirmative votes from Council for the approval of grants.

CITY MANAGER'S/GENERAL MANAGER'S COMMENTS

The General Manager of Community Services RECOMMENDS approval of the foregoing.

REPORT

Background/Context

2015 HAW Regional Theme - Can You See Me?

The 10th annual Homelessness Action Week will take place across various Lower Mainland municipalities from October 11th to 17th, 2015. Until 2013, Homelessness Action Week was coordinated across the region through the Metro Vancouver Homelessness Secretariat (MVHS). As in 2014, this year the MVHS is not coordinating HAW or providing support because of changes to federal Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) funding criteria. All HPS funding is now targeted for Housing First Initiatives and HAW does not fit the criteria. Homelessness Action Week will once again take place in municipalities across the region, but each municipality will be responsible for coordinating and funding its own HAW at the local level, with regional coordination occurring through the Council of Metro Vancouver Community Homeless Tables. As such, notwithstanding the withdrawal of the Federal Government as a funding partner, Homelessness Action Week will continue to provide a unique opportunity regionally and locally to engage citizens, the media, and the private and non-profit sectors on the causes of and solutions to homelessness.

The purpose of this report is to seek Council approval for a variety of community and grassroots initiatives that will support positive and engaging events taking place in Vancouver during HAW and throughout the year. The City of Vancouver has played an integral leadership role in initiating and supporting HAW since its inception and has strived to generate more events, activities and interest each year since 2009:

- In 2009, the City provided \$9,300 to four community groups (RTS 08283)

- In 2010, the City provided \$10,500 to five community groups (RTS 08788)
- In 2011, the City provided \$25,000 to nine community groups (RTS 09325)
- In 2012, the City provided \$30,000 to eleven community groups (RTS 9581)
- In 2013, the City provided \$35,000 to eighteen community groups (RTS 10135)
- In 2014, the City provided \$40,000 to sixteen community groups (RTS 10619)

Community interest in HAW has grown since 2009. Grant funds have contributed to uniting Vancouverites in a common goal to raise awareness about and create solutions to the issues of homelessness, and support organizations providing direct services to homeless individuals. This year almost \$60,000 in grant requests was received from 21 non-profit societies. Staff recommend allocating \$43,000 to fund 18 of these requests (see Appendix A).

Staff will report back in September, 2015 to provide Council with an opportunity to proclaim October 11th to 17th 2015 as Homelessness Action Week, and to provide Council with more detailed information on the events and projects taking place for HAW.

Strategic Analysis

HAW 2015 builds on the success of partnerships between the City, the Province and other private and not-for-profit partners to reduce homelessness through a diversity of responses. Some of the key drivers for success are highlighted below.

Partnerships - HAW 2014 builds on the success of partnerships between the City, BC Housing, Vancouver Coastal Health and other private and not-for-profit partners, such as Street To Home, to reduce homelessness through a diversity of responses including:

Low-Barrier Shelters -partnerships with BC Housing resulting in low-barrier shelters such as the *HEAT and* Winter Response shelters have played a critical role in moving people inside.

New Supportive Housing - The City/BC Housing MOU supportive housing sites will continue to have a significant impact on achieving our goal of ending street homelessness with a policy of requiring the units be tenanted with individuals directly experiencing street or sheltered homelessness (50%) currently living in Single Room Occupancy Hotels (30%), and at risk of losing their housing (20%). Vacated SROs are also aggressively being backfilled with street and sheltered homeless.

Vancouver Affordable Housing Agency - The creation of the Vancouver Affordable Housing Agency is a key step in the work to meet the targets contained within the Vancouver Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2012-2021. Its creation will enhance the City's ability to expedite the delivery of a larger number of more affordable housing options for a target range of residents who are currently struggling to find affordable housing options. The Agency is a new vehicle designed to leverage partner innovation, equity and financing toward meeting these goals. The Agency's key targets include the creation of 2500 affordable housing in the areas of non-market rental (social housing including supportive housing if partners are available to deliver support services), innovative renewal and replacement programs for SROs and the existing affordable rental stock in the city as well as piloting strategies for affordable home ownership.

Health and the Lived Environment - The Healthy City Strategy being developed by the City plays an integral role in supporting and engaging individuals who are homeless as well as those who are successfully housed. Some HAW events will engage housing providers to showcase their programs and their successes in supporting homeless individuals and will feature some of the supportive housing outcomes during HAW.

Expanding Our Reach - More and more neighbourhoods across the city and region are becoming involved in efforts aimed at ending homelessness. Homelessness creates unimaginable human suffering for the individual and negatively impacts our communities. Individuals struggling with homelessness live in every part of our city. As demonstrated by the breadth of HAW grants recommended in this report, neighbourhood responses to this issue are having marked impacts.

Providing Homeless Outreach Services - The Carnegie Homeless Outreach Program's city-wide shelter and street outreach service has resulted in effective placement of homeless individuals in permanent housing. Using the Vulnerability Assessment Tool (VAT), the team is able to assess the vulnerability of individuals applying for housing, provide direction on the type of housing that is suitable for their needs, and help ensure the tenanting of buildings with people who are homeless and at risk.

Renovating Single Room Occupancy Hotels - The Provincial purchase of 13 SRO hotels provided over 1400 units of supported and social housing. These SRO hotels will be improved through renovations as a result of the Federal P3 initiative. Work is underway with completion scheduled for 2015. The COV provides a grant of \$5000 per room to non-profit owned or operated SROs who want to upgrade their rooms. A \$2 million from the 2015-2018 Capital Plan was approved to support this initiative and fulfils a key implementation goal of the DTES Plan to improve SRO conditions and livability for tenants.

2015 HAW Grants

The goals of Vancouver's 2015 HAW Grants include:

1. Creating innovative solutions to local homelessness and supporting new approaches and opportunities to prevent or eliminate homelessness.
2. Building the capacity of neighbourhoods to raise awareness about and respond to issues of homelessness.
3. Building healthy, safe and inclusive communities in neighbourhoods across the city.
4. Supporting existing and creating new partnerships and leveraging opportunities to address homelessness and affordable housing needs.

These four goals are aligned with the priority actions of the *Housing & Homelessness Strategy 2012-2021 Strategic Direction 3: Provide strong leadership and support partners to enhance housing stability*. The priority actions speak to research and innovation, improvements in health and safety, and partnering opportunities for prevention and elimination of homelessness.

Community groups are important partners in helping to achieve desired outcomes and HAW grants enable the City to develop new relationships with non-profit community groups and nurture existing ones.

A formal call for proposals to host events or organize projects supporting the four HAW goals during the week of HAW 2015 and throughout the year resulted in 21 applications totalling \$60,625 in requests. Total available funds are \$43,000 from which a group may receive a maximum of \$3,000. Grant applications were available online.

Of the 21 applications, this report recommends approval of 18 grants, see Appendix A, that were reviewed and assessed according to the following criteria:

- Projects had to be designed to directly benefit people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness within local neighbourhoods.
- Organizations had to:
 - Be a registered non-profit society based in Vancouver
 - Have a proven track record for delivering projects, services and/or hosting events
 - Demonstrate a strong level of partnership with a range of key local stakeholders
- Priority was given to projects that leveraged funding from other sources.

Applicants that had received HAW grants in the past were eligible to apply but each organization was eligible to receive only one grant. Projects being recommended for funding provide unique opportunities for capacity and skills development, awareness raising and direct access to resources and services for the homeless and those at risk.

Personal stories of overcoming mental health and addiction and/or struggles with homelessness humanize this very tragic issue. Some of the grants being recommended in this report support giving voice to homeless individuals through dialogue, panel discussions, and the visual arts. Other grants provide the opportunity for homeless people and those at risk to connect with a range of service providers in their communities.

Overall, interest in the grants this year was strong and, while all applications met some of the eligibility criteria, those being recommended in this report more strongly supported the goals and criteria set out in the proposal call. Staff will work with the unsuccessful applicants to build capacity for next year.

The Table in Appendix A summarizes the applications received and the recommended level of support for each.

Connect Events

Since 2009, the City has hosted Homeless Connect Events. These events provide people who are homeless and those at risk of homelessness with direct services, such as haircuts, foot care, food, health and dental services, access to income assistance and BC Housing staff, etc. Annually, COV sponsored Connect or Connect-style events have taken place at the Carnegie Library (Carnegie Alley Health Fair) and at the Gathering Place Community Centre (Gathering Place Connect). Last year, Evelyne Saller Community Centre hosted its first Homeless Connect event (Evelyne Saller (44) Community Connect) as well. This year Kitsilano Community Centre will also host a Connect event. These four Connect events along with those organized by community groups that are recommended for grant approval (see

Appendix A) will result in Connect events occurring in different local neighbourhoods both during HAW and at other times of the year.

Communications Plan

Staff are working with Corporate Communications to draft a comprehensive Communications Plan for HAW 2015. An activities and events calendar will be created and posted on www.stophomelessness.ca as well as the City's website.

Implications/Related Issues/Risk (if applicable)

Financial

This report recommends Council approve \$43,000 in grants to 18 non-profit organizations. The source of funds is the 2015 Community Services Operating Budget - Street Homelessness

Social Implications

Homelessness has tragic consequences for the individual experiencing homelessness, as well as the impact on the community. Individuals experiencing homelessness also create significant costs to our health and social services and criminal justice system. The City is targeting its limited resources to enable a proactive engagement with the wider public to create more awareness and understanding of the impact of homelessness on the individual, the neighbourhood and the wider community.

HAW takes place not only the City of Vancouver but across the region and promotes healthy and inclusive neighbourhoods by engaging all residents in raising awareness about homelessness issues amongst those in their community.

CONCLUSION

This report seeks Council approval of \$43,000 in grants to support a variety of grassroots initiatives outlined in Appendix A to support positive and engaging events taking place in Vancouver's 2015 Homelessness Action Week (October 11-17, 2015).

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RECOMMENDING:					
Agency	Event Description	2014 Grant	2015 Request	2015 Recom	Notes
Aboriginal Mother Centre Society	Community Open House: Thanksgiving community dinner for homeless, at risk and housed community members, tour of AMCS, access to service providers and care kits for homeless and those at risk, diaper drive for low-income and marginally housed mothers and children. Packed lunches delivered to DTES community.	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$2,500	
Atira Development Society	Second Annual SRO Tenant Convention: A convention for tenants of DTES privately-owned SRO Hotels to learn about the Standards of Maintenance Bylaw, their rights under the RTA, actions they can take to improve conditions, and advocacy, organizing and leadership skills. The goal is to prevent homelessness by supporting tenants to advocate for improved low-income housing.	n/a	\$3,000	\$3,000	The SRO Tenant Convention in 2014 was organized by CCAP and received a 2014 HAW Grant of \$3,000.
Collingwood Neighbourhood House Society	Triple A Transit Form - Affordable, Accessible and Available for Homeless: A public forum to highlight and promote access to public transit as an essential support service for people facing homelessness. One to two speakers from FairFares Calgary that spearheaded successful transit advocacy in Calgary will share their model. Meetings with Translink staff, the Metro Vancouver Transportation Committee and the Mayor's Council will be sought.	n/a	\$2,000	\$1,700	
Creativa Cultural Association	For a Muse of Fire: A community engaged theatre project involving individuals who live, work or study in the DTES who have experienced homelessness or who are vulnerably housed. Using classical theatrical and original text, participants will explore themes of community, equality, diversity and inclusion. Public performances aim to inspire dialogue, learning and collaboration to address homelessness issues. For a Muse of Fire builds on the success of Much Ado About Something, a project coordinated by Raincity Housing for HAW 2014. 2015 HAW Grant will fund honoraria for 9 participants.	n/a	\$3,000	\$2,700	

Agency	Event Description	2014 Grant	2015 Request	2015 Recom	Notes
DTES Women's Centre Association	Tapping the Resource Bank - Understanding Expanded Housing Services: A workshops series led by the DEWC housing team for women in the community, including those who are hard-to-house, to understand rights and responsibilities of tenant-landlord relationships, explore concepts of client choice (one of the tenets of Housing First) and safe, affordable housing, and share personal struggles and successes. Information resources to be accessible ongoing throughout the centre and the community will be prepared. The aim is to make DEWC services better understood and to allow more women to access housing supports.	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$2,700	
Frog Hollow Neighbourhood House	Hunger Banquet Community Dialogue: Frog Hollow youth and community members will construct care kits and make blankets to be donated to local non-profits working with the homeless, screen "Where We Sleep," documentary about homeless youth, and host a Hunger Banquet to stimulate discussion on homelessness issues.	n/a	\$3,000	\$2,300	
Gallery Gaget Society	Oppenheimer Park Community Art Show: A month-long art exhibition at Gallery Gaget featuring work by artists who use the Park frequently, many of whom are homeless or at risk. During the art-making process, artists will be provided with direct social and peer support through Oppenheimer Park's partners and other resources.	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$3,000	
Inland Refugee Society	Forum on Housing & Homelessness among Refugee Claimants: A partnership with the UBC School of Economics focusing on the lived experience of refugee claimants who are homeless, have been homeless or have been at risk of homelessness in order to better understand the challenges and needs of this vulnerable population. A closed-door discussion group with refugee claimants and UBC students will precede a day-long public forum at UBC on Housing and Homelessness among Refugee Claimants living in Metro Vancouver. A report of data collected, recommendations will be disseminated.	n/a	\$2,925	\$2,925	

Agency	Event Description	2014 Grant	2015 Request	2015 Recom	Notes
John Howard Society of Lower Mainland BC	Preventing Homelessness; Promoting Growth: A day-time event to provide the homeless and those at risk of homelessness in the Kensington-Cedar Cottage area with a meal, care kit, housing resource guide, and access to services including free medical and dental clinics, and to provide local service providers the opportunity to showcase their services. Presentations from people with lived experience will encourage learning, enhance understanding of homelessness issues, and challenge assumptions.	n/a	\$3,000	\$2,500	In 2014, this project was executed by PLEA Community Services. They received a 2014 HAW Grant of \$2520.
Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood House	Welcoming Our Neighbours; Fostering Warmth: Building on their HAW 2014 initiative to help all members of Mount Pleasant community feel welcomed, MPNH's Youth Committee will host a Sock Drive and, with community members, bag nutritious meals to distribute to the homeless during HAW. As well, new residents of the Vancouver Native Housing Society building at Fraser and Broadway will be invited throughout the year to attend multicultural and community dinners to help the tenants build community connections.	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$2,300	
PACE Society	PACE Society Open House: An Open House welcoming the community to PACE's new location, public launch of PACE's Housing Report of research from their HAW 2014 event, and information including a Housing Resource table. The event provides the public with an opportunity to learn what PACE does and the rare opportunity for PACE to connect with sex workers who may not otherwise want to identify as such but want to see what programs and supports are available.	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$2,200	
Pivot Legal Society	Vancouver Tenants Together: Day of Action on Evictions: Workshop on Pivot's "Know Your Rights" card to equip vulnerably housed persons with legal education on tenancy rights, and public launch of community report on legalities of mechanisms used to evict people in the DTES. Partnership with VANDU and Urban Health Research Initiative.	n/a	\$3,000	\$775	Will collaborate with Atira (above) and provide workshop and launch at the 2015 SRO Convention

Agency	Event Description	2014 Grant	2015 Request	2015 Recom	Notes
Renfrew-Collingwood Seniors' Society	Welcome, We Care About You: An intergenerational project with Grade 4 students, 'at risk' high school students, and seniors. 40 - 50 lunch bags will be painted and filled with toiletries, nutritious treats and a welcome card. Bags and essentials like dishes and canned food will be delivered to new residents of Kingsway Continental Hotel over the year. A hearty meal will be delivered twice over the year, and seniors will make and deliver Christmas cookies. The aims are to help new residents feel welcomed and cared for, and to help youth and seniors better understand homelessness issues.	n/a	\$3,000	\$2,500	
Union Gospel Mission	The Hello Neighbour Project: A day-long event to connect the DTES community with the wider Vancouver community to share knowledge, create understanding and build bridges of compassion and respect. The day will include The Hello Neighbour Walks led by community members, The Hello Neighbour Hang at Oppenheimer Park, and The Hello Neighbour Talk presentation at a local venue. HAW Grant funding will cover the costs of honoraria for Walk tour guides.	\$2,415	\$3,000	\$2,000	
Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre Society	Warm It Up Tuesday: Provide "Warm It Up" care packages for the winter season and a hot meal to people who are homeless, at risk or in transition. Expect to reach at least 100 shelter clients, 100 people on the street, and 50 tenants in transitional housing, and aim to help 10 people find secure and safe housing.	n/a	\$2,500	\$2,500	
Vancouver Community Network	Street Messaging System: Five lunch and learn sessions will be held during HAW to train social service agencies on VCN's cell phone Street Messaging System, develop a policy framework, and devise a process to allow new social service providers rapid access to the system. The aim is to improve the access both to social service information and to social services by people who are homeless to reduce street homelessness and improve health conditions.	n/a	\$3,000	\$2,200	

Agency	Event Description	2014 Grant	2015 Request	2015 Recom	Notes
Vi Fineday Family Shelter Society	Fresh Start for Families: Construction of Fresh Start Kits, including items such as pots, pans, dishes, cutlery, blankets, laundry soap, and a "Know Your New Neighbourhood" pamphlet, for families who typically have nothing when leaving the shelter. Speaking engagements by staff to local community service organizations will inform public about homelessness issues and widen VFFSS's community connections & partnerships.	n/a	\$3,000	\$2,200	
Watari Youth, Family & Community Services Society	Under One Umbrella Homeless Connect: A day-long service fair for people who are homeless or at risk with up to 40 community service providers. Annual attendance over 8 years has been approximately 500.	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$3,000	
NOT RECOMMENDING:					
Agency	Event Description	2014 Grant	2015 Request	2015 Recom	Notes
Access to Music Foundation	Death in a Dumpster: As part of a larger existing music theatre program for and by homeless youth called Death in a Dumpster, this project is a series of public community forums on issues of youth homelessness.	n/a	\$3,000	0	
La Boussole Community Centre	HAW in the Francophone Community: Give at least 10 presentations in Francophone and French immersion schools to provide students with information about the realities of homelessness in Vancouver and challenges the homeless face. Children and youth will be invited to help prepare, serve and share a meal for and with La Boussole homeless clients.	n/a	\$3,000	0	
Parish of St. Faith's	Homelessness Action Week in Action: Production of an 8 to 10 minute video featuring four 2015 HAW projects and highlights of work being done by Anglican Churches on Vancouver's west side to serve and support those who are homeless and marginalized. The project will culminate in a community meal and video screening.	\$750	\$1,150	0	
			Total request	Total recom	
			\$59,575	\$43,000	