



ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Report Date: June 10, 2016
Contact: Abi Bond
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VanRIMS No.: 08-2000-20
Meeting Date: June 29, 2016

TO: Standing Committee on Policy and Strategic Priorities
FROM: General Manager, Community Services
SUBJECT: 2016 Homelessness Action Week (HAW) Grants

RECOMMENDATION

- A. THAT Council champion Vancouver's 2016 Homelessness Action Week by supporting neighbourhood-based responses to homelessness.
- B. THAT Council approve an allocation of \$33,650 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 9 - 15, 2016) and throughout the year; source of funds to be the 2016 Community Services Operating Budget - Street Homelessness.
- C. THAT Council direct staff to report back by September 30, 2016, to proclaim HAW 2016 and to showcase actions and events being planned.

REPORT SUMMARY

The 2016 Homelessness Action Week (HAW) is the 11th annual Metro Vancouver campaign aimed at raising awareness about and building local capacity for solutions to homelessness. This report recommends that the City support 12 community organizations to host events during HAW and throughout the year to promote HAW and connections with their local homeless populations. The \$33,650 in grants will come from the 2016 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

Homelessness Action Week 2016

The 11th annual Homelessness Action Week will take place across various Lower Mainland municipalities from October 9th to 15th, 2016. Until 2013, Homelessness Action Week was coordinated across the region through the Metro Vancouver Homelessness Secretariat (MVHS). As in 2014 and 2015, 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)
- In 2015, the City provided \$43,000 to eighteen community groups (RTS 10980)

Community interest in HAW has grown overall 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 \$45,000 in grant requests was received from 15 non-profit societies. Staff recommends allocating \$33,650 to fund 12 of these requests (see Appendix A).

Staff will report back in September, 2016 to provide Council with an opportunity to proclaim October 9th to 15th, 2016 as Homelessness Action Week, and to provide Council with more detailed information on the events and projects taking place for HAW.

Strategic Analysis

HAW 2016 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, including the opening of low-barrier temporary winter response shelters, building new social and supportive housing, providing homeless outreach services, and supporting our non-profit partners to improve livability and conditions in single-room occupancy (SRO) hotels.

2016 HAW Grants

The goals of Vancouver's 2016 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. 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 2016 and throughout the year resulted in 15 applications totalling \$44,700 in requests. Total available funds are \$40,000 from which a group may receive a maximum of \$3,000. Grant application forms were available online.

Of the 15 applications, this report recommends approval of 12 grants 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.

Other HAW Events

Other events for Homelessness Action Week are coordinated by City staff and funded through the 2016 Community Services Operating Budget - Street Homelessness.

1. 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 the BC Housing registry, etc. COV-sponsored Connect or Connect-style events have taken place at the Carnegie Library (Carnegie Alley Health Fair), the Gathering Place Community Centre (Gathering Place Connect), the Evelyne Saller Community Centre and the Kitsilano Community Centre. This year, all four sites will host a Connect-style event. These four Connect events along with similar events organized by community groups will result in Connect events occurring in different local neighbourhoods both during HAW and at other times of the year.

2. 2016 City-Sponsored Event: SRO Room Exhibit

Staff are planning to hold a special event during Homelessness Action Week that includes an installation of an SRO room. This exhibit is a reproduction of an actual room of a resident living in the King Rooms, a DTES SRO hotel. Many in the low-income community rely on SROs for their housing and many of the tenants of these rooms have experienced homelessness. As such, the exhibit represents the fine line or interface between homelessness and being vulnerably housed, and provides an ideal opportunity for educating the public on a range of issues related to homelessness. The exhibit was most recently installed at the Nikkei Museum in Burnaby. Staff are finalizing a venue to host the exhibit during Homelessness Action Week.

Communications Plan

Staff are working with Corporate Communications to draft a comprehensive Communications Plan for HAW 2016. 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 \$33,650 in grants to 12 non-profit organizations. The source of funds is the 2016 Community Services Operating Budget - Street Homelessness.

Social Implications

Homelessness involves severe human suffering and represents a waste of individual potential. It also poses significant costs to our health and social services and criminal justice system. Targeting our limited resources for more proactive social objectives would positively impact the quality of life for all Vancouver citizens.

HAW takes place not only in 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 \$33,650 in grants to support a variety of grassroots initiatives to support positive and engaging events taking place in Vancouver's 2016 Homelessness Action Week (October 9 - 15, 2016).

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| RECOMMENDING: | | | | | |
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| Agency | Event Description | 2015 Grant | 2016 Request | 2016 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, low-income individuals, and marginally housed mothers and children. Packed lunches delivered to DTES community. | \$3,000 | \$3,000 | \$3,000 | |
| Circle of Eagles Lodge Society | Anderson Lodge Homeless Action Day Stew & Bannock: Between Oct 9 and 12, Anderson Lodge residents and staff will prepare stew and bannock for 600 people, to be served along with care kits to homeless and at risk in DTES and other parts of Vancouver. Through this project, Lodge residents will have an opportunity to 'give back' to the community. | n/a | \$3,000 | \$3,000 | |
| DTES Women's Centre Association | READY TO RENT: Two to three RentSmart 12-hour workshops will be offered by DEWC staff certified by Ready to Rent BC to groups of 12 homeless and at-risk women throughout the year. The workshops include training on tenancy issues, landlord/tenant relationships, landlord responsibilities, effective communication skills, budgeting, maintenance and crisis management. A primary aim is to empower women to be more independent in their housing searches and housing loss prevention. | \$3,000 | \$3,000 | \$3,000 | |
| Forest and the Femme | Roots to Wings - A Strengths-Based Leadership Project: A project to promote the leadership strengths, skills and attributes of Forest and the Femme's loyal participants - highly marginalized women of the DTES. Participants are given and trained in leadership tasks tailored to each woman's unique strengths and abilities to promote their sense of courage, confidence, competence and improved self-esteem in a way that is safe, comfortable, trauma-informed and accommodating. | n/a | \$2,900 | \$2,000 | |
| Frog Hollow Neighbourhood House | Hunger Banquet Community Dialogue: Based on the success of last year's project, Frog Hollow youth and community members will again construct care packages to be donated to at-risk | \$2,300 | \$3,000 | \$3,000 | |

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| | mothers at the Aboriginal Mother Centre Society and host a Hunger Banquet to stimulate community dialogue and learning on homelessness issues. | | | | |
| Gallery Gachet Society | Oppenheimer Park Community Art Show: A month-long art exhibition at Gallery Gachet 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 | |
| PACE Society | Storytellers Homelessness Experience: Weekly writing workshops for PACE members led by local author Amber Dawn will culminate in a housing-themed storytelling event to foster discussion on homelessness and persons' engagement in sex work. PACE proposes to leverage the voices and expertise of Sex Workers and researchers working with them. The event aims to shed light on the critical need for public health interventions and housing models to account for the daily lived experiences of Sex Workers. | \$2,200 | \$2,800 | \$2,650 | |
| Positive Living Society | We Can't Afford Poverty: A participatory project in collaboration with Raise the Rates that highlights the widening gap between rich and poor through community-driven art. DTES community members are invited to workshop art projects, such as a community quilt reflecting experiences of being on welfare or disability, to be used to push for higher welfare rates. The grant will cover community honoraria. | n/a | \$3,000 | \$2,000 | |
| Powell Street Festival Society | SRO Travelling Exhibition: A virtual SRO room exhibit as part of the 2016 Powell Street Festival to raise awareness about and build connections for the current inhabitants of the Downtown Eastside Oppenheimer District, many of whom live in SRO housing or are homeless and vulnerable to displacement. Over 15,000 people who attend the festival are invited to experience a physical and human connection to DTES SROs through this installation and learn about the diverse communities (Indigenous, Japanese Canadian, low-income, homeless and marginalized) who have fought for their human right to remain. | n/a | \$3,000 | \$3,000 | |

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| Renfrew-Collingwood Seniors' Society | Setting Roots in Your Community, We Care About You: Based on the success of last year's project, this is 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. The lunch bags and essentials like dishes and canned food will be delivered to new residents of the 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. As requested by KC residents, this year plants and seeds will be included for their community garden. | \$2,500 | \$3,000 | \$3,000 | |
| South Vancouver Neighborhood House | New Heights: A new opportunity for 25 at-risk youth involved in the BC Housing STEP summer pre-employment program to build community connections in Champlain. The youth will form a planning advisory group to create 3 youth training focus group sessions on key issues, including food security and housing. A community dinner will build the capacity of the Champlain neighbourhood to raise awareness of youth homelessness and leverage opportunities to address affordable housing needs. | n/a | \$3,000 | \$3,000 | |
| 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 | 2015 Grant | 2016 Request | 2016 Recom | Notes |
| Justice for Girls Outreach Society | Real Game of Life: A workshop activity to share learnings about the issues faced by young women and girls who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. | \$0 | \$3,000 | \$0 | |
| PCRS Broadway Youth Resource | Starting Over, Leaving the Streets - Finding the Margins: Video project | \$0 | \$3,000 | \$0 | |

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| Society | featuring interviews of up to 30 youth describing their first year of stable housing, addressing the transition from life on the streets or couch surfing to life in housing. | | | | |
| Streetohome Foundation | Moving Forward Video Project (Life Intentions Focus): A video project to enhance the Foundation’s impact and build public awareness of homelessness by giving individuals with lived experience an opportunity to voice what they need to “Move Forward” . | \$0 | \$3,000 | \$0 | |
| | | | Total request | Total recom | |
| | | | \$44,700 | \$33,650 | |