



City of
Peterborough

To: Members of the Joint Services Steering Committee

From: Ken Doherty, Director of Community Services

Meeting Date: June 9, 2016

Subject: Report CSSSJSSC16-004
211 Information Referral System

Purpose

A report to provide the Joint Services Steering Committee with an update on the pending changes to FourInfo.com and 211 Information Referral System Services.

Recommendations

That the Joint Services Steering Committee approve the recommendations outlined in Report CSSSJSSC16-004 dated June 9, 2016, of the Director of Community Services, as follows:

- a) To receive a presentation on the status of 211 from the United Way Peterborough (UWP);
- b) To authorize Staff to enter into discussions with UWP and 211 Ontario on potential changes to the agreement with 211 for Peterborough; and
- c) To authorize the Director of Community Services to sign any required service agreements with 211 within the approved budget level.

Budget and Financial Implications

Report C555J55C09-001 (Appendix A) endorsed the proposed implementation of 211 in Peterborough in 2009, provided there were no costs to the city from 2009 and 2012. That provision has been met and there have been no increased costs as a result of 211 from 2009 to the present. However, there are proposed changes to the relationship with 211 and the United Way that could have budget implications for the City and County, which currently provide \$33,813 in annual funding to the United Way through the Community Social Plan budget.

The extent of the financial impact if funding is directly awarded to 211 is not known at this time. Any proposed increase to the budget would need to be addressed through the 2017 budget approval process or a separate report depending on the effective date of the proposed changes.

Background

211 is an easy to remember phone number that connects people to a range of non-emergency social, health, community and government services. By calling 211 an individual reaches an information specialist trained to understand their questions and needs and link them to the best available information and services. Peterborough joined 211 in 2009 with start up costs covered by the province. Report Jan 2009 – C555J55C09-001 Council endorsed (Appendix A) proposed implementation provided there is no cost to the City from 2009 and 2012.

Locally there has always been a three-way partnership between the City, the County and UWP for information and referral services. FourInfo.com is a web site that provides agency information in Peterborough, Northumberland, City of Kawartha Lakes and Haliburton and predates 211. This data on agencies and services is then fed into the 211 system. United Way Northumberland has been the lead on FourInfo.com with UWP providing staff time to update agency records. Social Services, working with UWP, has used this local data to develop a number of sector specific resources like the Community Services Map www.peterborough.ca/CommunityServiceMap.

Anticipated Changes to FourInfo.com

The technical platform that FourInfo.com is built on is reaching end of life and while there is currently an interface between it and the 211 system it is expected within the next year that interface may not be functional. Partly as a result of this change and the gaining 211 brand, United Way Northumberland has indicated that they are considering terminating their role in maintaining and administering this database. At the same time 211 is requesting that United Ways and Consolidated Municipal Service Managers across the province increase their direct financial support to 211. The amount requested is based on population size and a formal that apportions costs as follows:

Cost of 211 Proposed Allocations

Province 60 %	60%	9.0
Federal 10%	10%	1.5
Municipal	20%	3.0
United Ways	10%	1.5
Total	100%	15 Million

For Peterborough United Way, based on population, the anticipated contribution request from 211 would be approximately \$20,000 for the City and County through the Social Services Division and for UWP \$12,000 to \$15,000.

211 Usage Since Implementation

Within the Central East area between 2009 and 2015 the number of calls has been rising. The top 3 reasons for calls are cited as:

- Health Services
- Social supports
- Income /financial assistance

Appendix B attached to this report provides a summary of calls within the Central East Region for the year ending 2014. Appendix C attached provides an overview of 211 and includes a sense of the rising use of 211 over time as well as an explanation of the proposed new fee structure.

Awareness of 211 in the Peterborough area is still somewhat limited, in part due to the lack of specific marketing strategies in our area, and the better established FourInfo.com. If FourInfo.com ceases to operate a more aggressive local marketing strategy in cooperation with 211 will need to be undertaken.

United Way, City and County Partnership

United Way Peterborough supports and compliments the goals of the Community Services Department and benefits the citizens of the City and County of Peterborough in a variety of ways beyond the information and referral service. UWP through training and Board governance advice improves the Non-Profit sector through enhanced individual agency capacity, and helps with coordination and collaboration between agencies. UWP is the community entity for the Federal Homeless Partnership Strategy. They have worked with Staff to ensure effective coordination of that work with the 10 Year Housing and Homeless plan. UWP has also supported low-income families directly with a number of programs such as Coats and Backpacks for Kids and have worked with the Community Social Plan to ensure equitable access to these and other programs in the rural areas. UWP is a partner agency involved in emergency management related to volunteers. It is anticipated that an increasing need for volunteer development and support could align with City and County interests.

Following discussions with 211 Ontario, Staff will provide a recommendation around the budget allocation for 211 and United Way Peterborough that is aligned with the expectations for each service.

Summary

Changes to FourInfo.com are resulting in the need for the City of Peterborough as the Consolidated Municipal Service Manager to consider a different relationship between the City, 211 Ontario and UWP. Should changes require any significant further financial resources this would be handled through the budget approval process or a subsequent separate report.

Submitted by,

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Attachments:

Appendix A – Report C55509-001
Appendix B – 211 Central East Year End 2014
Appendix C – 211 Call to Municipal Service Managers and D555ABS Municipal Report