



City of  
**Peterborough**

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**To:** Members of the Peterborough Regional Liaison Committee

**From:** Sheldon Laidman, Commissioner of Community Services

**Meeting Date:** February 13, 2020

**Subject:** Report C55SPRLC20-001  
Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit Program

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## **Purpose**

A report to provide an update on the Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit program beginning April 1, 2020.

## **Recommendation**

That the Peterborough Regional Liaison Committee endorse the recommendation outlined in Report C55SPRLC20-001, dated February 13, 2020, of the Commissioner of Community Services, as follows:

That Report C55SPRLC20-001 and presentation about the new Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit program be received for information.

## **Budget and Financial Implications**

There are no budgetary or financial implications associated with the recommendation in this report.

## **Background**

The Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit (COHB) was announced as part of the National Housing Strategy. An agreement to deliver the program was signed at the end of 2019. This program is 100% funded by the provincial and federal governments, and conducted by the provincial government, through the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and

Housing and the Ministry of Finance. The City as Service Manager will be required to enter into an agreement with the Province to deliver the program and funding.

This program includes first and last month's rent assistance where appropriate. The COHB is to be calculated for each household to make up the difference between 80% of Average Market Rent and 30% of their monthly income.

Initial estimates indicate that the annual funding will providing assistance to between approximately 40-50 households in the City and County of Peterborough.

### **Funding Allocation and Timeline**

As detailed in Appendix A, beginning April 1, 2020, the City of Peterborough will receive the following 2-year allocation:

- 2020-2021: \$305,617
- 2021-2022: \$400,449

The COHB program end date aligns with the National Housing Strategy funding end date of March 31, 2029. A new bilateral agreement between the federal and provincial governments would be required to extend the program beyond March 31, 2029.

### **Service Manager Role and Responsibilities**

The City is Service Manager for housing and homelessness in the City and County of Peterborough. As Service Manager, the City's role in the COHB program is to identify and select eligible households. The 10-year Housing and Homelessness Plan's strategic direction to end chronic homelessness will guide this work. Staff will assist with applications to the Ministry of Finance.

### **Priority Groups**

There are two main priority group areas eligible for this funding – vulnerable populations and households in existing or new community housing. At this time, there is limited direction from the Ministry on whether any priority is higher than another. Priority groups include:

- Vulnerable populations
  - Survivors of domestic violence and human trafficking;
  - Persons experiencing or at-risk of homelessness;
  - Indigenous persons;
  - Seniors; and
  - People with disabilities.
- Households in existing or new community housing:
  - Households living in community housing that are not receiving affordability support; and

- Households no longer receiving financial assistance as a result of expiring federal-provincial programs or social housing operating agreements/mortgages.

### **Eligibility Requirements - Highlights**

Households must be on, or eligible to be on, the wait list for Rent-Geared-to-Income (RGI) housing to qualify. In addition, if the household is on the wait list, they must consent to be removed upon receipt of the COHB. Households must be permanent residents of Ontario, cannot own a home, cannot be in receipt of RGI or any other housing benefit other than Ontario Works/Ontario Disability Support Program shelter allowance.

### **Summary**

Staff are preparing a report to City Council to provide information from this report, and to request authority to enter into a Transfer Payment Agreement with the Province to secure this funding. As Service Manager the City must “identify and select eligible households” and “assist with applications to the Ministry of Finance.” The number of households receiving COHB does not count towards the City’s Service Level obligations but the COHB will help many households afford their housing expenses.

Submitted by,

Sheldon Laidman  
Commissioner of Community Services

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#### **Attachment**

Appendix A: Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit program funding allocation letter