

**Report to  
Rapport au:**

**Community and Protective Services Committee  
Comité des services communautaires et de protection  
18 May 2017 / 18 mai 2017**

**and Council  
et au Conseil  
24 May 2017 / 24 mai 2017**

**Submitted on May 5, 2017  
Soumis le 5 mai 2017**

**Submitted by  
Soumis par:**

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**Ward: CITY WIDE / À L'ÉCHELLE DE LA  
VILLE**

**File Number: ACS2017-CSS-GEN-0004  
ACS NUMBER**

**SUBJECT: Essential Health and Social Supports: Grants and Contributions**

**OBJET: Soutiens essentiels de santé et de services sociaux: Subventions et  
contributions**

#### **REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS**

That the Community and Protective Services Committee recommend Council reaffirm the eligibility criteria, applicant selection process, approval process and

reporting requirements for the existing Essential Health and Social Supports (EHSS) Program as identified in this report.

## **RECOMMANDATIONS DU RAPPORT**

Que le Comité des services communautaires et de protection recommande au Conseil de confirmer les critères d'admissibilité, le processus de sélection des demandeurs, le processus d'approbation et les exigences de présentation de rapports de l'actuel programme de Soutiens essentiels de santé et de services sociaux (SESSS), conformément à ce rapport.

## **BACKGROUND**

The requirement for Council to “reaffirm at least once per Term of Council” each Council approved funding program was included in the 2013 revision of the corporate Grants and Contributions policy (Council Dec 11, 2013, Bulk Consent Agenda Item L, FEDC Report No. 39, ACS2013-CMR-OCM-0022).

The purpose of this report is to satisfy that requirement.

## **DISCUSSION**

The City's Community and Social Services Department (CSSD) provides support to families and individuals in order to promote their self-reliance and quality of life in collaboration with our community partners and this is accomplished by delivering provincially mandated and Council-approved programs to some of the city's most vulnerable residents. The majority of services and programs are governed by specific provincial legislation (e.g. Ontario Works Act, Long Term Care Homes Act, Homemakers and Nurses Act, Housing Services Act, and the Child Care Early Years Act) and are cost-shared to varying degrees, (e.g. block funding, 50%,100%). The City also has complementary programs in some areas of the social services sector that provide 100% funding under the City's Grants and Contributions Policy, which came into effect on January 1st, 2011 and was last revised by Council on December 11th, 2013.

Through strategic investments and responsive community programs and services, CSSD aims to improve the quality of life for our most vulnerable residents in the areas of social assistance and employment, long-term care, child care as well as housing and homelessness prevention. One such program is the Essential Health and Social Supports Program as described below.

## **Essential Health and Social Supports Program**

The Essential Health and Social Supports (EHSS) program was established in 1998 when the Province abolished the Special Assistance (cost shared 50/50) and Supplementary Aid Programs (cost shared 80/20) that assisted low income residents, not in receipt of social assistance, with the purchase of essential health related items. Essential health related items include items or services such as dental care, vision care, medical supplies such as incontinence, surgical and diabetic supplies, as well as bathroom aids, and direct disposition (burials). The program allows eligible low income persons to maintain independent living arrangements; avoiding hospitalization or institutionalization.

The EHSS Program is 100% funded by the City of Ottawa, and was initially approved by Regional Council in 1998. The budget is determined by Council annually as part of the budget process. The 2017 City of Ottawa budget provided \$1,985,000 dollars to fund the EHSS program.

### **Eligibility Requirements**

EHSS benefits approved by Social Services staff are available to persons who are eligible according to the EHSS financial needs test and are not in receipt of social assistance.

On April 12, 2006, Council approved a recommendation to increase the asset limits for EHSS to those allowed under ODSP (an increase from \$3,000 to \$5,000 for single people). On June 16, 2010 (ACS2010-COS-CSS-0009), Council approved recommendations to replace the current needs test with an income testing using an after tax Low Income Cut-Off (LICO) which is an established and accepted measure of poverty. Council also approved an expansion of the EHSS asset definition to mirror ODSP's policy definition of exempt assets which includes:

- Cash surrender value of life insurance policies exempt up to \$100,000 per year.
- Compensation payment and awards for pain and suffering exempt up to \$100,000.
- One motor vehicle owned by a member of the family unit is exempt regardless of value.
- Second motor vehicle is exempt provided net value is less than \$15,000 and required to permit dependant of the applicant /recipient to maintain employment outside the home.

These standards for need and exempt assets continue to be utilized to assess an applicant's eligibility.

## **The Application Process**

Community and Social Service staff meet with low-income applicants to assess eligibility for essential health items by completing an income test using a low income cut-off (LICO) and asset levels based on family size to determine eligibility. Applicants cannot be in receipt of Ontario Works or the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) to be eligible for EHSS funds. Where eligible, staff work with the applicant to determine appropriate supports and services and a requisition is issued for the purchase of goods or service is provided as required by the client. Staff complete regular reviews on files to ensure clients remain eligible. The Community and Social Services Department has a complaint and appeal procedure which ensures all applicants and recipients are entitled to a fair, efficient and open review of decisions affecting their eligibility for programs, services and benefits regarding the provision of services which includes the EHSS program.

## **Client Profile**

Many EHSS applicants have one-time requirements for the above-mentioned items or services, while others have longer-term needs that require ongoing case management by Social Services staff.

A review of the EHSS statistics for the month of March 2017 indicate that 2199 cases (2796 clients) were eligible to receive EHSS and that the number of clients aged 65 and over was 73%. A majority of the clients are single (87%) followed by couples (8%) and sole support parents (5%). The clients claimed various types of income such as: pensions (75%), earnings (11%), other government sources such as Employment Insurance (EI), Ontario Student Assistance Program (4%), and other income (10%).

## **RURAL IMPLICATIONS**

This report does not have any rural implications.

## **CONSULTATION**

Consultation was not required for this report.

## **COMMENTS BY THE WARD COUNCILLOR(S)**

This is a City-wide report.

## **ADVISORY COMMITTEE(S) COMMENTS**

N/A

**LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no legal impediments to the implementation of the recommendation in this report.

**RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

There are no risk management implications associated with this report.

**ASSET MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

There are no asset management implications associated with this report.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no financial implications associated with the report recommendations.

**ACCESSIBILITY IMPACTS**

There are no accessibility impacts associated with this report.

**ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no environmental implications associated with this report.

**TECHNOLOGY IMPLICATIONS**

There are no technology implications associated with this report.

**TERM OF COUNCIL PRIORITIES**

The Essential Health and Social Supports Program support the Term of Council Strategic Priority of creating Healthy and Caring Communities improving the quality of life of our residents.

**DISPOSITION**

Staff will continue to provide funding to eligible applicants in accordance with the existing policies and procedures as outlined in this report and implement any Council direction provided as part of the consideration of this report.