

**Member Inquiry Form**  
**Demande de renseignement d'un membre du Conseil**

**Subject: Review of street outreach efforts**

**Objet : Examen des actions des travailleurs de rue**

**Submitted at:** Community and Protective  
Services Committee

**Présenté au :** Comité des services  
communautaires et de protection

**From/Expéditeur :**

**Date:** September 17, 2020

**File/Dossier :**

Councillor/Conseiller  
M. Fleury

**Date :** Le 17 septembre  
2020

CPS 04 - 20

**To/Destinataire :**

General Manager, Community and Social Services Department / Directrice général des services sociaux et communautaires

**Inquiry:**

**With the increase of individuals “sleeping rough” and the increase in outreach services deployed by the City this summer, can the City provide a review of the street outreach efforts? This review should include the goals of the program, total funds allocated, number of interactions, number of clients, along with any gaps or challenges that exist in connecting individuals with existing services and preventing outdoor encampments.**

**Demande de renseignement :**

**Compte tenu de la hausse du nombre de personnes qui dorment dehors et de l'augmentation des services d'approche municipaux mis en œuvre cet été, la Ville peut-elle procéder à un examen des actions menées par les travailleurs de rue? Cet examen devrait porter sur les objectifs du programme, le montant total des fonds alloués, le nombre d'interactions, le nombre de clients et les lacunes ou obstacles qui empêchent d'aiguiller ces personnes vers les services existants ou de prévenir les campements de rue.**

**Response (Date: 2020-Oct-02)**

With the onset of COVID-19, Ottawa has seen a significant increase in the number of people sleeping rough. Numbers are estimated to have jumped from 90 people pre-pandemic to approximately 150 at present. This movement is attributed in large part to fears of contracting COVID-19 while in shelter, as well as the availability of CERB funds and the onset of warmer weather months.

In response, the City and community partners have increased their street outreach efforts. There are currently 12 community agencies providing outreach services in Ottawa. These agencies include the Salvation Army Outreach Services, Ottawa Inner City Health, day programs, community health and resource centres, and others.

The target populations of the outreach efforts include those sleeping unsheltered, or people who are vulnerable and involved in street culture. Through an engagement and harm reduction approach, services:

- Administer assessments as appropriate to determine acuity, risk areas, and supports required;
- Connect and provide transportation for individuals to day programs, shelters, housing services and other supports;
- Provide COVID-19 hygiene kits, basic needs (water, snacks, clothing, etc) and harm reduction supplies;
- Collaborate across partners, provide coordinated access and participate in case conferencing; and
- Respond to concerns from residents and business.

Not all outreach services currently operating receive funding through the City. At present, the City:

- Allocates \$661,070 in annual funding to two agencies;
- Allocated \$501,449 in additional funds for outreach as part of the COVID-19 response.

Note: these figures do not include general operational funding that covers a number of services including outreach. This is a significant contribution with six of the agencies providing outreach services receiving operating funding through Community and Social Service's Community Funding.

Where funding specific to outreach is provided, agencies report on indicators including the number of individuals served and number of service connections. However, reporting reflective of the recent peak period of July, August, September, when many of the additional outreach services were added, will only be available as of late October.

However, statistics from Salvation Army Outreach Services for April to June 2020 include:

- Number of unique individuals served living on the street or precariously couch surfing: **282** (a 68% increase over the same period in 2019);
- Number of times individuals from above transported to shelter: **180** (a 3% decrease over the same period in 2019)
- Number of unique emergency shelter clients engaged on street: **602** (a 20% increase over the same period in 2019);
- Number of times individuals transported/supported to return to shelter: **318** (a 7% increase over the same period in 2019);
- Number of individuals/households transported to physical distancing centres, health services: **91** (not applicable in 2019)
- Number of times households diverted from emergency health care or police services and transported to shelter-based services: **281** (a 39% decrease over the same period in 2019).

These statistics are reflective of the increased service (two teams/vans were operating in 2020 versus one team/van in 2019), the increase in the street living population but also the hesitancy of clients to access shelter services.

In response to the increasing number of people sleeping rough and in encampments, the City convened a multi-departmental Unsheltered Task Force comprised of City Departments and Homeless Service Providers to address and respond to the emerging needs of unsheltered individuals. In September, the task force created an action plan for a coordinated response to encampments and the needs of unsheltered individuals.

The Action Plan identifies actions to respond to challenges in connecting individuals with existing services and preventing outdoor encampments including:

- Extending enhanced outreach services to the end of the year, and evaluating the need to extend contracts into 2021 based on need and available funding;
- Providing increased funding to day programs to extend their hours;

- Exploring increased access to indoor and outdoor space for respite in the downtown core for people experiencing homelessness;
- Opening additional physical distancing centres for men and women to create safer space for people to sleep inside and receive services and supports; and
- Increasing housing availability for encampment residents by exploring all available funding options to create additional housing subsidies and creating more sheltering options through the leasing/re-purposing of buildings.

The 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Work Plan will be presented to Committee and Council in Q1 2021 will consider any necessary additional actions.

**Réponse** (Date: le 2 octobre 2020)

La version française suivra

### **Council Inquiries**

#### **Demande de renseignements du Conseil:**

*Response to be listed on the Community and Protective Services Committee Agenda of October 15, 2020*

*La réponse devrait être inscrite à l'ordre du jour de la réunion du Comité des services communautaires et de protection prévue le 15 octobre 2020*