

# City Staff Report

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Original signed by: Deputy City Manager Bolton

**Report Date:** April 1, 2021

**Meeting Date:** April 6, 2021

**To:** City Manager

**From:** Community Development Coordinator

**Subject:** UBCM Strengthening Communities' Services Grant Application

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## Purpose

The purpose of this report is to gain Councils approval to submit an application to the Union of British Columbia Municipalities Strengthening Communities' Services funding program.

## Summary

This project is aimed at supporting unsheltered homeless populations and addressing community impacts. It is a one-year fully funded project that has many interrelated components which will be coordinated through a one-year contracted Community Social Coordinator position. Tangible aspects of the project include:

- One-year contracted Community Social Planner Coordinator. They will coordinate all aspects of this project, create and strengthen local connections and partnerships with community stakeholders in relation to poverty and homelessness, liaise with community groups, coordinate community short-term and temporary employment opportunities, create community outreach and public education social media and communications;
- Honoraria for Elders or those with lived experience;
- Incremental increases to the Clean Team;
- Coordination of, and wages for a Day Labour program, which will provide short-term work to those in need to quick, temporary employment;
- Communications and social media campaigns to increase public education and decrease stigma and discrimination;
- Mobile laundry/shower/washroom unit, or the renovations to an existing building to include showers, storage, and laundry. Location undecided;
- Locker units to be installed in a building(s) for homeless people to store personal items. Location undecided;
- Two new outhouses to be placed in the community (location to be determined at a later date);
- Training and education, including:
  - Managing Aggressive People course, which is scheduled for May 2021, and is open to our community health and social service providers.
  - Indigenous cultural sensitivity training. Exact details of Indigenous cultural training will be decided at a later date; Council and senior staff are in the process of developing required Indigenous training for staff and elected leaders.

## Recommendation

THAT Quesnel City Council supports the application to the Union of BC Municipalities for up to \$450,000 for the Union of BC Municipalities, Stengthening Communities grant for the Strengthening Quesnel's Homelessness Services Project and its proposed activities under the Strengthening Communities' Services program.

AND THAT Quesnel City Council commits to providing overall grant management for this project.



## **Council Policy**

The Official Community Plan:

5.1.2.22 Support and improve the quality of emergency and transitional housing or people experiencing homelessness.

6.5.2.5 Ensure activities are accessible and affordable to all residents including vulnerable populations such as children, seniors, people with disabilities, new Canadians, persons with mental health issues and/or addictions, and persons experiencing homelessness.

## **Financial Implications**

This funding program covers 100% of eligible project expenses, up to \$450,000 for a population of 5,000 - 40,000.

This funding program is meant to provide temporary solutions that address increased urgent and immediate needs related to unsheltered homelessness and do not create ongoing long-term financial obligations that will not be supported by the applicant.

## **Background**

Within the Safe Restart fund, this new funding stream by the UBCM “aims to support unsheltered homeless populations and address related community impacts through an application-based program. The goal of the program is to support local governments and Treaty First Nations that wish to take action, understanding that this will complement parallel provincial efforts. This program is meant to bridge the period between the COVID-19 outbreak and the post-COVID recovery period.”

The intended outcomes of this program include

- Improved health and safety of unsheltered homeless people living in public or private spaces, including reduced risk of COVID-19 or other disease transmission;
- Reduced community concerns about public health and safety in neighbourhoods where unsheltered homeless populations are seeking temporary shelter and services;
- Improved coordination among eligible applicants and health/social service providers, Indigenous organizations and others working on housing, homelessness and service provision;
- Increased capacity of eligible applicants to work with homeless persons and Indigenous organizations towards culturally safe and trauma-informed responses.

In March 2020, the Homeless Services Association of BC conducted an inaugural Homeless Count in Quesnel. These counts have a methodological limitation of being an underrepresentation due to the fact that they are a point-in-time count which represent individuals during a 24-hour time period; the numbers are understood to be a minimum of people who are experiencing homelessness on a given day. It was estimated, before the COVID-19 pandemic, that there are approximately 121 homeless people in Quesnel. Of these, 60% (73 individuals) were considered unsheltered.

This project will require a significant amount of collaboration and coordination among community groups, service providers, and other stakeholders; already the City has support from the Quesnel Shelter and Support Society, Canadian Mental Health Association, and Northern Health. The opportunity this project provides to help build and strengthen community partnerships with numerous organizations and stakeholders will positively impact future projects, and initiatives, and will help provide a concerted effort to increase quality of life for those experiencing homelessness.

## **Concurrence**

Director of Development Services



## **Attachments**

Quesnel 2020 Homeless Count Infographic