

Community and Health Services Department
Multi-Year Plan - Early Investment Options for Council Consideration
Overall Theme - Keeping Residents Contributing to our Economy and Communities

Initiative	Timeframe	Cost	Rationale
Theme 1: Improve supports to the working poor			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide support to help sustain households through unexpected emergency or financial crisis so they can focus on finding and keeping employment 			
Emergency Financial Assistance to Avoid Loss of Housing	2009 onward	2009 \$200,000 Annualized \$400,000	New Program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide temporary financial assistance to households at risk of losing housing due to significant income loss (e.g. loss of employment). Funding made available to households living in market rent units in social housing sites. Many of these households do not have sufficient resources to enter the ownership market and are particularly vulnerable in periods of economic downturn. When these households experience a significant loss of income, the housing provider incurs significant financial losses through rental arrears and has no alternative but to proceed with eviction. These evicted households may require shelter services or other costly interventions. Providing temporary rent-geared-to-income assistance to preserve these tenancies prevents homelessness and provides stability for the affected families and their housing providers. There are approximately 1800 market rent units – support could be provided to help from 45 to 60 households.
Homelessness Prevention Program (HPP)	2009 onward	2009 \$250,000 Annualized \$250,000	Enhancement; existing costs of program: \$300,000 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance funding to HPP so renters in private rental units or homeowners can stay in their homes when they lose their jobs and while they search for new ones. In 2008, HPP allocated \$228,412 in client service and served 164 households.

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Theme 2: Improve supports to C&HS clients with multiple barriers			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve access to basic needs and improve access to supports that assist in stabilizing housing 			
Clothing Allowance for Domiciliary Hostel Residents	2009 onward	<p>2009 \$108,000</p> <p>Annualized \$108,000</p>	<p>New Program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Domiciliary Hostel residents funded by Homes for Special Care (HSC) may receive \$600 clothing allowance per year while residents funded by York Region may receive \$150 for winter clothing only. It is recommended that a general clothing allowance of \$300 be provided to York Region funded Domiciliary Hostel residents to ensure that whether the resident is funded by HSC or the Region, they receive adequate clothing. There is an average of 360 residents per month in Domiciliary Hostels.
Housing Support Services for Special Priority Applicants and Households	2009 onward	<p>2009 \$87,500</p> <p>Annualized \$175,000</p>	<p>New Program</p> <p>1) Provide up to three months of individual transitional housing support services to special priority applicants (e.g. people who are suffering from or who are at risk of domestic violence) to assist them in establishing and maintaining successful tenancies in rent-geared-to-income housing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each year more than 125 special priority households are housed in the Region's social housing portfolio. In order to stabilize applicants coming out of emergency situations and establish a successful tenancy, these households may require assistance, such as income supports, appropriate programs for their children, personal financial management skills training, etc. At present it can be very difficult for a special priority applicant to access all of the supports required. <p>2) Provide housing support programs for special priority households in social housing locations where a majority of rent-geared-to-income vacancies are filled by special priority applicants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most special priority households choose housing locations in the Markham/Richmond Hill area. Consequently, there are currently six housing sites that consistently fill most of their rent-geared-to-income vacancies with special priority households. Housing sites with significant special priority populations are not resourced to assist these households in maintaining successful tenancies. Funding would support a purchase of service of two transitional support staff through community-based agencies.

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Theme 3: Respond to resident needs			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Support children in need</i> 			
Backpack Program	2009 onward	2009 \$125,000 Annualized \$125,000	New Program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This program will help families receiving Ontario Works to provide their children with essential school supplies at the start of the new school year. • The program will address implementation concerns with the introduction of the Ontario Child Benefit (OCB). • The OCB is designed to help parents receiving social assistance transition to work by taking child benefits off of social assistance and allowing parents to continue to receive these benefits after beginning employment. • Back to School Allowances formerly provided to parents on social assistance as a lump sum payment have been consolidated into monthly OCB payments. These poorly resourced families are now expected to put part of their monthly OCB payment over the course of the year toward seasonal costs. The purchase of seasonal expenses such as back to school supplies will cause hardship to many Ontario Works families. This proposed Backpack Program will assist families on OW who cannot afford these seasonal items and avoid other shortfalls in the family budget (e.g. food, rent). • The services of a community agency will be used to purchase and distribute the backpacks. • This program will help approximately 2,500 school-aged children across the Region annually.
Winter Coat Program	2009 onward	2009 \$240,000 Annualized \$240,000	New Program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This program will help families receiving Ontario Works to provide their children with a winter coat. • The program is also designed to address implementation concerns with the OCB. Lump sum payments for Winter Clothing Allowances for Ontario Works clients has ended and is now consolidated into monthly OCB payments. This increases the burden on low income residents in York Region as it will be difficult for these families to provide for these important seasonal items for their children. • This program is estimated to help approximately 3,200 children in York Region annually.

Early Investment Options

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Options	2009	Annualized
Theme 1: Improve supports to the working poor		
Emergency Assistance Housing	\$200,000	\$400,000
Homelessness Prevention Program	\$250,000	\$250,000
Theme 1 total	\$450,000	\$650,000
Theme 2: Improve supports to clients with multiple barriers		
Domiciliary Hostel Clothing Program	\$108,000	\$108,000
Housing Support Special Priority Applicants	\$87,500	\$175,000
Theme 2 total	\$195,500	\$283,000
Theme 3: Respond to resident need		
Backpack Program	\$125,000	\$125,000
Winter Coat Program	\$240,000	\$240,000
Theme 3 total	\$365,000	\$365,000
TOTAL	\$1,010,500	\$1,298,000