**Agenda – Council – October 28, 2021**

**Report – Executive Policy Committee – October 20, 2021**

**Item No. 16 End Homelessness Winnipeg, Annual Funding Agreement Report**

EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On October 20, 2021, the Executive Policy Committee concurred in the recommendation of the Winnipeg Public Service and submitted the following to Council:

1. That this report be received as information.

## Report – Executive Policy Committee – October 20, 2021

DECISION MAKING HISTORY:

EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On October 20, 2021, the Executive Policy Committee concurred in the recommendation of the Winnipeg Public Service and submitted the matter to Council.

Jason Whitford, CEO, End Homelessness Winnipeg, submitted a presentation dated October 20, 2021, in support of the matter.

# ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

**Title**: End Homelessness Winnipeg, Annual Funding Agreement Report

**Critical Path:** Executive Policy Committee - Council

## AUTHORIZATION

| Author | Department Head | CFO | CAO |
|---|---|---|---|
| C. Brens | C. Fernandes | N/A | M. Jack |

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since 2015, End Homelessness Winnipeg (EHW) has served as the backbone organization supporting the implementation of the 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness in Winnipeg (Attachment 1).

As part of the City's 2020-2023 operating budget, the Public Service was directed to enter into a funding agreement with EHW for a four (4) year period in the amount of One Hundred Fifty Thousand dollars ($150,000) per year. The goal of this grant is to support EHW's 2019 Five-Year Business Plan (Attachment 2), that aligns with the goals of the 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness in Winnipeg, as well as Reaching Home, Canada's Federal Strategy to End Homelessness.

As part of the funding requirements of this grant, EHW is to submit an annual written report detailing its activities over the previous year and identify if it was successful in reaching its goals and objectives. In compliance with this requirement, in June 2021 EHW submitted its report to the City for the period of September 15, 2020 to June 15, 2021 (Attachment 3). It is important to note that the timing of this report does not reflect the full 2021 calendar year, as the organization's 2020 report was submitted in September of 2020. EHW's 2021 report provides an update on seven (7) measurable targets for reducing homelessness in Winnipeg, highlighting specific actions, activities and achievements related to each target. In addition, EHW also provided the City with supplementary data (Attachment 4) on the progress of the targets of the 5- year plan.

This administrative report provides the Executive Policy Committee (EPC) with key highlights taken from EHW's 2021 report.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That this report be received as information.

## REASON FOR THE REPORT

The City of Winnipeg Council-approved 2020 - 2023 Operating Budget directed the Public Service to enter into a grant agreement with EHW in the amount of $150,000 per year, for four (4) years. As part of this funding agreement, EHW is required to submit an annual written report detailing:

- The recipient's activities over the past year.
- Whether the recipient has been successful in reaching its goals and objectives, with an explanation as to why or why not.

To satisfy the requirements of their funding agreement, in June of 2021 EHW submitted its annual report. This administrative report provides EPC with a summary of some of EHW's key activities and achievements over the past year.

## IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS

There are no implications arising from receiving this report as information.

## HISTORY/DISCUSSION

End Homelessness Winnipeg (EHW) received its mandate from the 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness in Winnipeg launched in 2014. EHW was established in 2015 with financial contributions from the United Way of Winnipeg, the Province of Manitoba, the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority and the City of Winnipeg. EHW uses a collective impact approach to work with partners from diverse sectors to prevent and end homelessness in Winnipeg. Since 2015, EHW has served as the backbone organization supporting collaborative responses for Homelessness Prevention, Unsheltered Homelessness, and Housing.

Since 2018, EHW transitioned to become an Indigenous non-profit organization with predominantly Indigenous staff and board members reflective of the population impacted by homelessness.

EHW has been appointed as the permanent Community Entity (CE) for Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy. Within their role of CE, EHW is well positioned to align local and Federal funding strategies to achieve tangible outcomes that can prevent and end homelessness.

The Community Services (CmS) Department provides support to EHW with regards to both governance and engagement. The Department Director is a member on EHW's Board of Directors, as well as the Board's Audit Committee. CmS staff, including the Manager of Community Development, participate in regular meetings led by EHW including those related to extreme weather, unsheltered homelessness, and more recently, the COVID-19 pandemic. EHW staff regularly participate and support City initiatives. In 2021, this included collaborating and supporting the development of the City's forthcoming Poverty Reduction Strategy, as well as supporting the City's ongoing Gotta Go Strategy for public access to washrooms.

As a grant recipient of the City of Winnipeg, EHW is required to submit reporting requirements on an annual basis. EHW's 2021 report highlights the organizations' ongoing efforts to end

homelessness, while this administrative report provides a high-level summary of key activities and achievements identified by EHW in 2021.

## COVID19 Pandemic Coordinated Response

On March 11, 2020 the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a global pandemic, and for the succeeding 18 months almost all public facilities and private businesses were either closed or operated with limited capacity. Winnipeggers across the City did their part to follow public health guidelines and limit the spread of the COVID-19 virus. However, for those experiencing homelessness the ask to "stay home" was impossible. The pandemic necessitated a rapid and collective response from community-based organizations, governments, the public, and people with lived experience, to identify and address priorities for the health, safety and well-being of residents experiencing homelessness.

In response to the above, EHW led and organized a COVID-19 response for the City's homeless serving sector, expediently connecting 60 agencies across Winnipeg to develop, implement and monitor a collective response plan. This included planning related to social distancing measures in shelters, low barrier alternative isolation accommodations, testing sites near shelters, accessible transportation, access to healthy food and hygiene supports, access to public washrooms, and enhanced mobile outreach services.

The response led by EHW ensured a level of consistent communication and coordination across sectors, including regularly scheduled meetings on key issues initiated at the start of the pandemic and that continue today. This approach also led to the development of many new partnerships between community-based organizations, and between these frontline agencies and the Public Service. For example, the Department of Community Services, the City's Office of Emergency Management, Corporate Communications, and other Public Service areas are now regularly engaged with community-based agencies due to initial meetings led by EHW.

As of June 15, 2021, and through three successive waves of the pandemic, Winnipeg has averted a major COVID-19 outbreak within its emergency shelter system. This outcome is in part due to the above noted response plan, the work of community-based organizations, and the leadership of EHW throughout the pandemic.

## Extreme Weather Response

EHW facilitates an Extreme Weather Response Committee, coordinating strategies during adverse and extreme weather events. The committee includes representatives from emergency shelters, outreach services, City departments, Health services, and Environment and Climate Change Canada. Throughout the reporting period, the Committee was critical to ongoing and consistent communication related to available services. This includes supporting the rollout of both Winter and Summer resource guides (Attachments 5 and 6) which outline available services, their locations, and hours of operation.

Moving into the summer of 2021, the committee shifted planning efforts towards a year-round approach to address weather hazards at any time of the year. This included the June 2021 release of the committee's updated Extreme Weather Response Plan. Included as Attachment 7, this plan provides a homeless-centered approach to keeping all Winnipeggers safe during extreme weather events including heat, cold, and storms.

## 24/7 Safe Spaces

The June 2019 report of the Illicit Drug Task Force recommended the expansion of 24/7 Safe Spaces in Winnipeg. That same year, EHW conducted a scan and survey of existing resources, gaps and capacity for new or expanded safe spaces in Winnipeg. The results of the scan and survey helped to inform a new grant program to support 24/7 Safe Spaces funded as part of the City's multi-year budget. In August of 2020, EHW staff participated on the City's grant selection committee that made recommendations to City Council to award funding for the City's 24/7 Safe Space grant program. The grant program was implemented in 2020, resulting in funding for Velma's House and West End 24/7 (WE24). Administered and overseen by Ka Ni Kanichihk, Velma's House provides a low barrier safe space for women exiting sexual exploitation, fleeing intimate partner violence or experiencing homelessness. Velma's House is located in West Broadway. WE24, hosted by Spence Neighborhood Association (SNA), is an overnight safe space for youth ages 13-26 in the West End of Winnipeg.

As outlined in EHW's 2021 reports, both safe spaces further expand access to critical services for key populations experiencing homelessness. However, the report stresses the need for governments to continue to address ongoing resource needs into the future. EHW continues to provide support for 24/7 Safe Spaces, while engaging Safe Space providers in its development of a Coordinated Access system. Once implemented, the Coordinated Access system will include a centralized inventory of housing resources that streamline the process to access housing and supports.

## Kíkininaw Óma: A Strategy to Support Unsheltered Winnipeggers

Released in June of 2020, the Kíkininaw Óma strategy offers context on unsheltered homelessness and encampments in Winnipeg. The strategy outlines six (6) recommendations for supporting individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness or living in encampments. The report itself was developed in partnership with the Kíkininaw Óma Strategy Group, with representation from the City of Winnipeg, the Winnipeg Outreach Network, homeless serving agencies and people with lived experience of homelessness.

In the 12 months since the release of the Strategy, progress has been made on some of the recommendations, while barriers exist for others. A one-year update on the strategy was released by EHW in June of 2021 (Attachment 8).

One important outcome of the Kíkininaw Óma Strategy, and the associated strategy group, is the development of the Non-Emergent Encampment Support Process, formally known as the "Interim Strategy". Through this process, individuals who encounter an encampment or an individual sleeping unsheltered can contact 311 and, if appropriate, they will be diverted to an outreach service provider ("OSP") as the first point of contact. Currently, the City works closely with two OSP's: Main Street Project (MSP) and St.Boniface Street Links. Once contacted, the OSP will send outreach workers to attend the locations identified in the calls to assess and connect individuals with appropriate supports and services. Emergency calls are directed to 911 so that appropriate first responders can attend.

## Housing Supply Action Committee

Housing insecurity has been a long-standing issue in Winnipeg. EHW continues to advocate for the urgent need for housing, and recommends governments explore diverse models that support a continuum of housing types and services.

Recently, EHW supported a successful application to the Reframe Housing Competition, a national award designed to support innovative affordable housing initiatives. Through this project, a 24-unit transitional housing project was secured under the title “Housing Through Collaboration”. The project encompasses the coordination of services and supports, as well as an innovative financing model developed by 8 participating Indigenous and Women’s organizations, based on a model used for other public infrastructure projects.

In addition, EHW initiated Astum Api Niikinaahk: the Village Project with MaMawi Wi Chi Itata and other Indigenous organizations. The Village Project, which is adjacent to the Thunderbird House, anticipates developing 22 new housing units for Winnipegger’s experiencing homelessness. Astum Api Niikinaahk is expected to welcome its first tenants in the Fall or Winter of 2021, providing important new housing stock in the city.

**FINANCIAL IMPACT**

## Financial Impact Statement **Date:** October 14, 2021

## Project Name:

End Homelessness Winnipeg, Annual Funding Agreement Report

**COMMENTS:**

There is no financial implication resulting from the recommendation to receive the report as information.

*"Original signed by K.Lemoine"*
Kelly Lemoine, CPA, CA
Manager, Finance and Administrative Services
Community Services Department

## CONSULTATION

This Report has been prepared in consultation with:

- End Homelessness Winnipeg

## OURWINNIPEG POLICY ALIGNMENT

- Theme 3-1 - Opportunity:
  - Direction 3: Work with community partners to foster an inclusive and equitable community &
  - Direction 4: Work within municipal service areas as a collaborator on poverty reduction.
- Theme 01-2a - Collaborate to Make Safe Communities -
  - Direction 6: Take a broad-scaled, complete and collaborative approach to crime prevention.
- Theme 1-4 - Housing
  - Direction 3: Establish partnerships with the private, not-for-profit and government sectors to provide affordable housing throughout the city

## WINNIPEG CLIMATE ACTION PLAN ALIGNMENT

Not applicable

## SUBMITTED BY

Department: Community Services Department
Division: Community Development
Prepared by: Karen Glugosh, Community Development Worker, Chris Brens, Manager Community Development
Date: October 14, 2021
File No: CMS-2021-11

**Attachments:**

Attachment 1: The Plan to End Homelessness in Winnipeg
Attachment 2: End Homelessness Winnipeg 5-Year Plan (2020-2025)
Attachment 3: Report to City of Winnipeg Executive Police Committee: June 2021
Attachment 4: Supplementary Data: Progress on the Targets of the 5-Year Plan, 2020-2025
Attachment 5: Winter Resource Guide
Attachment 6: Summer Resource Guide
Attachment 7: Extreme Weather Response Plan
Attachment 8: Kikininaw-Oma Strategy to Support UnshelteredWinnipeggers-1 Year Report