

DATE OF MEETING April 4, 2022

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SUBJECT 2022 STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES SERVICES PROGRAM

OVERVIEW

Purpose of Report

To seek Council endorsement for a 2022 Strengthening Communities Services Program funding application.

Recommendation

That Council endorse an application to the 2022 Strengthening Communities Services Program to fund and provide overall grant management for the following projects:

- (a) Extreme Weather Shelter and Support Program;
- (b) Food Security and Breakfast Program;
- (c) Snuneymuxw Hulit Lelum's Homeless Outreach Team Support; and,
- (d) Community Policing Volunteer (CPV) Program Support.

BACKGROUND

The Strengthening Communities' Services Program (SCSP) is a shared funding program provided by the Government of Canada and the Province of British Columbia to support unsheltered homeless populations and address related community impacts.

The City of Nanaimo successfully applied for and was granted \$2.5 million from the first round of funding in 2021. With this funding, the City has been able to recover costs and fund additional services to address homelessness including the shower program, downtown clean-up and security programs, portable toilets in key locations, as well as supporting a government to government partnership with Snuneymuxw First Nation for temporary housing. The 2021 funding will also assist with operating costs and culturally appropriate program delivery for tenants in the housing (see Attachment A).

Approximately \$20 million is being allocated to a second round of the SCSP for 2022. The City of Nanaimo is eligible to apply for 100% funding up to \$625,000 (based on city population). The application deadline is 2022-APR-22 and funding announcements are expected by 2022-JUL-31. The purpose of this report is to seek Council's direction with this second round of grant funding.

To be eligible for funding, proposed activities must meet one or more of the following intended program outcomes:

1. Improved health and safety of unsheltered homeless people living in public or private spaces, including reducing risk of COVID-19 or other disease transmission;

2. Reduced community concerns about public health and safety in neighbourhoods where unsheltered homeless populations are seeking temporary shelter and services;
3. Improved coordination among the eligible applicant and health/social services providers, Indigenous organizations, and others working on housing, homelessness, and service provision; and,
4. Increased capacity of eligible applicants to work with homeless persons and Indigenous organizations towards culturally safe and trauma-informed responses.

In addition, applications must demonstrate:

1. The evidence of need in the community (unsheltered homeless population estimates, housing needs reports, etc.).
2. The solutions proposed are temporary and address increased urgent and immediate needs without creating long-term financial obligations.
3. Include new activities or expansion of existing activities with costs incurred after the application is submitted.
4. Be capable of completion within one year of grant approval.

The Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM), who are administering this grant program, will support multi-faceted approaches to achieve program outcomes. Multiple eligible projects and initiatives can be included in one application package, and funding can be approved for all or a portion of the full submission. |

DISCUSSION

|It is recommended that the 2022 SCSP funding application be directed towards:

- a) improving and extending existing effective City initiatives to support the unhoused such as, the temporary Breakfast Program funded between September 2021 and December 2021, Extreme Weather Shelter Programs, and the Community Policing Volunteer Program; and,
- b) ongoing government to government initiatives with Snuneymuxw First Nation to strengthen their capacity to support members of their Nation who are unhoused.

Table 1 provides a list of projects compiled by Staff, in consultation with community partners, for Council consideration. Costing will be further refined as the City completes the funding application.

Table 1: Proposed 2022 SCSP Funding Application

	2022 SCSP Proposed Projects	Budget
1.	Extreme Weather Shelter and Support Programs	\$299,300
2.	Food Security and Breakfast Program	\$200,200
3.	Snuneymuxw Hulit Lelum's Homeless Outreach Team Support	\$78,900
4.	Community Policing Volunteer Support	\$46,600
	Total	\$625,000

1. Extreme Weather Shelter and Support Programs

The City has worked in partnership with various community organizations to ensure shelter for the homeless during extreme cold winter temperatures, extreme hot summer temperatures, as well as a warming space for generally cold days. In past years, the combination of weather sheltering and related support programs has been achieved through a combination of funding sources. This initiative is a 2022 SCSP eligible activity as it would temporarily increase emergency extreme weather shelter capacity and related services in the City.

Extreme Weather Shelter Program proposed budget:

August 2022 – July 2023 \$299,300

2. Food Security and Breakfast Program

For many years a regular breakfast program has been operated in Nanaimo by a community organization (7-10 Club). However since the closure of a City owned location rented by the 7-10 last year (to make way for permanent supportive housing), the organization has not re-established in another location. To bridge an anticipated gap in service and give the 7-10 time to re-open in another location, the City funded another community organization already providing a sit down lunch and dinner meal, to provide breakfast between September and December 2021. Since December 2021 the 7-10 has not re-established with a stable location and the Salvation Army were unsuccessful in receiving funding from Nanaimo's Reaching Home Federal funding to continue to a breakfast service in 2022/2023 beyond the bridge funding provided by the City. The SCSP funding, if successful, would support a sit down breakfast meal and address on existing gap for a morning emergency meal service enabling those who are unsheltered to eat indoors out of the elements. This initiative is a 2022 SCSP eligible activity as it provides temporary basic needs for unsheltered homeless populations.

Breakfast Program proposed budget:

August 2022 – July 2023 \$200,200

3. Snuneymuxw Hulit Lelum's Homeless Outreach Team Support

To support the work of the Snuneymuxw Hulit Lelum's Homeless Outreach Team, it is proposed to apply for funding to lease a mini-van and cover the operating costs of the leased vehicle (i.e. fuel, insurance, and maintenance) for one year. The van will allow the outreach team to better serve and transport Snuneymuxw's unhoused community members to services that support their needs. This project aligns with the Health and Housing Action Plan direction to "support local capacity for Indigenous led housing and social support services in partnership with Snuneymuxw First Nation". In addition, this project meets the 2022 SCSP criteria of partnering with Indigenous communities and organizations.

Homeless Outreach Team support proposed budget:

August 2022 – July 2023 \$78,900 (based on projected mileage required)

4. Community Policing Volunteer (CPV) Program Support

To support the Nanaimo RCMP Community Policing Volunteer Program (CPV), it is proposed to apply for funding to lease a vehicle and cover the operating costs of the leased vehicle (i.e. fuel, insurance, and maintenance) for one year so that CPV volunteers can better meet the demand due to the limitations of having only one vehicle. The CPV program is a joint effort between the City of Nanaimo and the Nanaimo RCMP to help promote community safety in Nanaimo Neighbourhoods hardest hit by the impacts of homelessness. Currently, the CPV patrol neighbourhoods to provide enhanced safety by operating as extra 'eyes and ears' for the neighbourhood and report suspicious or criminal activity to police, bylaw, or sanitation services. In addition, they provide outreach and navigational support to unsheltered population by providing drinking water, socks, gloves, and toques during extreme weather. The volunteers also provide safety information to neighbourhood residents, including the unsheltered about who to call, where to go for help, and what support services are available. This initiative aligns with actions in the Nanaimo Health and Housing Plan by improving access to supports for all community members. In addition, this initiative is a 2022 SCSP eligible activity as it supports community neighbourhood participatory activities for security.

Community Policing Volunteer support proposed budget:

August 2022 – July 2023

\$46,600 (based on projected mileage required)

OPTIONS

1. That Council endorse an application to the 2022 Strengthening Communities Services Program to fund and provide overall grant management for the following projects:

- (a) Extreme Weather Shelter and Support Program;
- (b) Food Security and Breakfast Program;
- (c) Snuneymuxw Huliit Lelum's Homeless Outreach Team Support; and,
- (d) Community Policing Volunteer (CPV) Program Support.

- The advantages of this option: The proposed 2022 projects and initiatives address urgent needs in Nanaimo to support unsheltered homeless populations and address related community impacts.
- The disadvantages of this option: None identified.
- Financial Implications: In recent years the City has provided funding to support gaps in extreme weather shelter and emergency food and this funding would allow City to fund these programs for 2022/2023 without seeking alternate sources. There are no apparent financial implications should the projects stay on budget.

2. That Council not endorse an application to the 2022 Strengthening Communities Services Program to fund and provide overall grant management for the proposed projects.

- The advantages of this option: Staff time would not be used towards overall grant management.

- The disadvantages of this option: The proposed support for some these programs is contingent on receiving grant funding.
 - Financial Implications: For some of the projects included in this proposal that the City has previously funded, there is a high likelihood that gaps will continue and that the City may be asked to provide support for 2022/2023 and not applying for this grant removes a potential option for the City to recoup these costs.
3. That Council provide alternative direction to Staff for a project to include in the 2022 Strengthening Communities Services Program funding application.]

SUMMARY POINTS

- The 2022 Strengthening Communities Services Program is accepting applications for funding to support unsheltered homeless populations and to address related community impacts.
- The City of Nanaimo is eligible for 100% funding up to \$625,000 in the 2022 application intake, and the application deadline is 2022-APR-22. Funding announcements are expected by 2022-JUL-31.
- The funds requested would support existing established and effective programs in the City, as well as fund new initiatives that align with the 2021 Health and Housing Action Plan.

ATTACHMENTS:

ATTACHMENT A: 2021 Strengthening Community Services Program Approved Activities and Budget

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