

REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF OTTAWA-CARLETON
MUNICIPALITÉ RÉGIONALE D'OTTAWA-CARLETON

REPORT
RAPPORT

Our File/N/Réf.
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DATE 9 April 1997

TO/DEST. Co-ordinator
Community Services Committee

FROM/EXP. Commissioner, Social Services Department

SUBJECT/OBJET **COMMUNITY HOUSES**

DEPARTMENTAL RECOMMENDATION

That Community Services Committee recommend Council approve that \$95,000 be transferred from the Social Services Department project funding (One-Time Grants) envelope to Purchase of Service funding in 1997 to be allocated to Community Houses to assist with coordination.

BACKGROUND

Community Houses are row houses which have been turned over by the Ottawa-Carleton Regional Housing Authority (OCRHA) to communities to be used for the implementation of on-site social, health, and/or recreational programs. They are overseen by a board, a house committee, or a tenant's association.

Through repeated one-time funding since 1988, the Social Services Department has been the only provider of funds towards coordination of programming within these communities. Regional Council adopted Motion 1 in 1992 "That Regional Council at this time, not provide sustaining grants for Community Houses but continue to receive applications for funding from Community Houses on a yearly basis" and Motion 3, that "In the event that Provincial funding does not become available, that Council consider establishing a funding envelope under sustaining grants for "Community Houses" administration in existing houses in Ottawa-Carleton Regional Housing (OCRHA) housing for 1993". The Ministries of Housing, Health and Community Services were approached to set up secure funding during that year, but without success.

A number of Community Houses have received one-time grants repeatedly from year to year. Six (6) Community Houses have been allocated funding this year through the One-Time Grants process; \$15,000 each have been allocated to Banff Ave Community House, Confederation Court Community Organisation, Russell Heights Community House, Tenants Association and Blair Court Community House, and The Debra Dynes Community House, and \$20,000 to La Maison Communautaire du Bon Voisinage. Twelve (12) Community Houses exist within the Region and it is likely that more requests for funds will come in the future, as many Community Houses find it difficult to operate strictly on a volunteer basis. Currently, Morrison Gardens, Britannia Woods and Pinecrest Terrace have no coordination while Caldwell Family Centre is a Regionally funded Day Program Britannia Woods benefits from a staff person from the YM-YWCA, and Better Beginnings Better Futures, located in Heatherington, is a Ministry funded initiative. The funding allocated through the One-Time Grants process is not based on equitable criteria. It may be appropriate for the Social Services Department to address this issue in the future if funds for Community Houses are allocated through the Purchase of Service envelope, taking into account needs and restricted availability of funds. Annex A summarises the funding history of Community Houses with the Region.

DISCUSSION

Coordination facilitates working closely with the community in order to identify needs, find ways to meet these needs, recruit and provide ongoing support to volunteers, and pursue other funding.

According to the Ottawa-Carleton Regional Housing Authority (OCRHA), eighty-two percent (82%) of families in OCRHA family communities are in receipt of social assistance and approximately 50% of these families are of non-Canadian origin, mostly refugee households. A very high density of youth under 18 live in these communities and an estimated 60 to 75% of the households are single-parent mothers, many who have been victims of violence.

Most users of Community Houses experience barriers, such as lack of transportation and childcare, or simply isolation and fear of leaving their homes, which limit their ability to access the appropriate services that are situated outside their immediate community. Community Houses help engender a sense of belonging, responsibility, and ownership in the community; help the community identify and work on common issues, and encourage a system of peer support; help increase self-esteem in community residents; and help serve as a stepping stone to help people move on to other resources. Community Houses also serve as an access point for professional services from other organisations such as Community Resource and Health Centres. Community Houses enable people on low income in their communities to address issues that affect them and are in a position to address racism due to the ethnocultural composition of their members. These activities address two of the priorities for one-time grants, and of the Departmental Strategic Plan.

Recommendation From The 1997 One-Time Grants Allocations Committee

The Allocations Committee for One-Time Grants for Health and Social Services strongly suggests that the Purchase of Service funding stream is more appropriate than the Project (one-time) stream for this group of agencies.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

The need for more stable support of the coordination needs of Community Houses has been documented by the Community Houses themselves, by professionals working with the Community Houses and has been amply acknowledged yearly by the One-Time Grants Allocations Committee.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATION

\$95,000 is being allocated towards coordination of Community Houses in 1997 through the One-Time Grants process. The transfer of this amount from the One-Time Grant envelope of \$441,981 would leave \$346,981 for project (one-time) grants in 1998.

CONCLUSION

Community Houses are critical for the low income and ethnocultural communities in which they are situated, where they help facilitate community solutions to community issues.

By supporting Community Houses, the Region supports work at the grassroots level, supports activities which help address and alleviate racism, and assist people on low income resolve issues which affect them. This is consistent with the Social Services Department's mission of promoting a healthy community in Ottawa-Carleton.

*Approved by
Dick Stewart
Commissioner*

DS/dm

ANNEX A

COMMUNITY HOUSES	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Banff Ave.	\$10,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$7,500	\$15,000
Confederation Court	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$7,500	\$15,000
Russell Heights	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$12,000	\$7,500	\$15,000
The Debra-Dynes		\$10,000	\$10,000	\$7,500	\$15,000
Foster Farm Family House	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$12,000	\$7,500	
Tenant Association and Blair Court			\$10,000	\$7,500	\$15,000
La Maison Communautaire du Bon Vaisinage			\$10,000	\$12,000	\$20,000
Britannia Woods			\$10,000		
TOTAL	\$55,000	\$70,000	\$94,000	\$57,000	\$95,000