

REGION OF OTTAWA CARLETON
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REPORT
RAPPORT

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<u>Information Previously Distributed</u>	
To Be Listed on Community Services	
Committee Agenda	17 Dec 98

DATE 2 November 1998

TO/DEST. Coordinator
 Community Services Committee

FROM/EXP. Commissioner
 Social Services Department

SUBJECT/OBJET **COMMUNITY CAPACITY - PRIORITIES AND PROCESS FOR
 REINVESTMENT OF NCB SAVINGS**

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report to inform Community Services Committee on the identified priorities and process for allocating National Child Benefit (NCB) municipal savings for reinvestment in community capacity.

BACKGROUND

In October 1998 Community Services Committee approved the overall plan for the reinvestment of \$2m (annualized) in municipal savings resulting from the deduction of the federal National Child Benefit Supplement (NCBS) from social assistance benefits. The overall plan allocated \$400,000 to ensure ongoing community capacity in a range of community programs and services that would assist children, youth and high risk families.

The federal government will be increasing the NCBS by 50% in July 1999, and a further 50% in July 2000, resulting in further municipal savings. The community capacity envelope will thus increase up to \$800,000 (annualized) beginning July 2000 when the program is fully in place.

The Ministry of Community and Social Services has informed municipalities that the provincial and federal governments expect and require that municipal savings be reinvested in a manner consistent with NCBS objectives (see section on Development of Funding Priorities below). An accountability process is being developed which will include municipalities to ensure that, without exception, provincial and municipal savings stay in the envelope and are reinvested.

DEVELOPMENT OF FUNDING ALLOCATION PRIORITIES

It is recognized that community agencies continue to be challenged by changing and emerging needs. This challenge has been compounded since the mid-1990's by funding reductions to community agencies and reductions to social assistance benefits. Social Services commends the innovative and creative ways in which community agencies in the Region have responded to this challenge. The criteria for the NCB reinvestment is based on NCB objectives. Therefore the reinvestment of NCB savings may not address specific agency reductions that have occurred in the past. Nevertheless, it represents an opportunity to build community capacity in areas focusing on children, youth and families. The NCB objectives are:

1. To prevent and reduce the depth of child poverty; and
2. To promote attachment to the workforce - resulting in fewer families having to rely on social assistance - by ensuring that families will always be better off working.

An NCB Reinvestment Working Group was formed to develop priority areas for building community capacity and develop a process for allocating funding. The Working Group established the following principles to guide the process. These include:

1. Focusing on low-income, both social assistance recipients and working poor families;
2. Targeting youth, high risk families and young children;
3. Breaking down the social isolation of children and families;
4. Building community capacity by supporting community-based programs and services; and
5. Reflecting community diversity of race, gender and language.

To develop the funding priority areas, the Working Group gathered information from a range of sources, including:

1. A priority-rating survey sent to agencies, client representatives on the Task Force on Poverty, and Regional staff. Forty-five (48) responses were received.
2. One-on-one interviews and focus groups with Regional staff.
3. Recently released data from Canada's National Longitudinal Study on Children and Youth.
4. The Poverty Funding Framework for United Way and Regional Social Services, Final Report, June 1977.
5. People First: Report of the People's Hearings on Poverty, March 1998.
6. Doing Less With Less, SPC Report on the 1997 Ottawa-Carleton Community Agency Survey, Spring 1998.

7. “All I Need Is A Job”: Interim report of the Monitoring Ontario Works Action Research Project, October 1998.

Funding Allocation Priority Areas

The NCB Working Group identified the following 3 priority areas based on the literature review, focus groups and survey responses: Parenting Support, Children/Youth/Counselling, and Food Security.

1. Parenting Support

The priority of infants/toddlers/parenting support emerged as a top priority in the priority-ranking survey.

Early childhood experiences make a critical and long-term difference in children’s health and well being. Programs focusing on supporting parents are an effective way to identify at risk children and provide the support they, and their families, need. Recently released data from the National Longitudinal Study on Children and Youth (NLCSY) indicates that low-income and single parent status have an impact on behavioural, school and relationship problems for children, but that parenting style is crucial. There were strong positive effects on children’s outcomes associated with positive parenting practices that held for rich and poor families alike.

Parenting support programs would include those programs which help build effective parenting skills, for example through on-site programs which offer opportunities for modelling effective behaviour, or home visiting programs offering one-on-one support.

2. Children/Youth/Counselling

Children/youth/counselling emerged as a priority in the survey results. Some specific needs were identified such as the need for services for children residing in family emergency shelters, the need to reduce the waiting lists for mediation services for youth applying for social assistance, outreach services to pregnant and parenting teens, some of whom are living on the streets or who are otherwise alone and without supports, and the need for enhanced counselling, drop-in and outreach services for youth, school-aged children and families across the Region.

3. Food Security

Food security (not having enough money to purchase adequate amount of food) has been identified as an issue for low-income families by the People’s Hearings on Poverty. Of 85 people who told their stories at the hearings, 31 said they have problems putting food on the table for themselves and their children. This was the most commonly cited material need (among housing (21 people), hydro and telephone (6), household needs and contingencies (12), personal hygiene and clothing (15) and bus fare (11)). Family Visitors from Regional Health’s Healthy Babies, Healthy Children program have also identified food security as an important issue for families with whom they work. In 1995 in Ontario, social assistance benefits for basic needs was reduced by 21.6%,

The 1998 release of data from the National Longitudinal Study on Children and Youth (NLSCY) reveals that families who report hunger have a household income 44% lower than other families. Families reporting hunger are most likely to have social assistance as their source of income, but families who report experiencing hunger include those who report wages or salaries as their source of income (the working poor).

Food Security programs which increase poor people's control over choice, quality, and access to food could include a range of innovative approaches ranging from "baby cupboards" stocking emergency food supplies for infants, collective kitchens, community gardens, school breakfast programs or programs which collect excess food from stores and restaurants for meals for the poor, to name only a few.

ALLOCATIONS PROCESS

The same funding process will be used to recommend allocations for the first two instalments of NCBS funds, January 1999 and July 1999, an estimated total of \$500,000 for 1999 (\$600,000 annualized). Funds allocated will be formalized within 3 year contracts, with probable renewal.

Social Services will review the funding priorities and process before allocating savings resulting from the final instalment of federal NCBS funds (funds available beginning July 2000) to ensure the flexibility necessary to meet changing and emerging needs.

The criteria for funding will be included in an application package that will be made available to interested agencies. Criteria will include:

1. NCB Objectives;
2. Principles established by the NCB Working Group;
3. Funding Priority Areas; and
4. Social Services Funding Criteria.

The timeframe for the allocations process will be as follows:

December 1998	Advertisement in The Citizen, Le Droit, community papers informing community of the availability of funding and calling for proposals
December 1998	Application packages available
January 1999	Information sessions held
Mid-March 1999	Deadline for submission of proposals
Mid-April 1999	Proposals reviewed and decisions made
May 6, 1999	Report to Community Services Committee outlining recommendations

*Approved By
Dick Stewart*

CP

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

FUNDING TO SUPPORT FAMILIES AND CHILDREN

The **Social Services of the Region of Ottawa-Carleton** is inviting non-profit community agencies to apply for funding for services which **build community capacity** within the National Child Benefit objective “*to prevent and reduce the depth of child poverty*” in the areas of:

- **Parenting support**
- **Children/Youth/Counselling**
- **Food Security**

Funds in the amount of \$500,000 will be available in 1999 with additional funds available in the year 2000 and subsequent years. Approved funding may be renewable.

Proposals should:

- **Focus on low-income, both Social Assistance Recipients and the Working Poor**
- **Target youth, high risk families and young children**
- **Break down the social isolation of children and families**
- **Build community capacity by supporting community-based programs and services**

Priorities will be given to proposals which:

- **Respond to the needs of ethnic and racial minorities**
- **Respond to the needs of aboriginal groups**
- **Respond to the needs of francophone communities, and**
- **Are joint collaborative proposals from more than one organization.**

An **information session** for agencies intending to apply for funds will be held on **12 January 1999** at **St. Paul University Auditorium**, 223 Main Street, Ottawa. To register please call Social Services Community Relations and Employment Development at **724-4166 by 8 January, 1999**. Application packages will be available in early January. **Deadline to submit proposals is 12 March, 1999**.