

# **Winter Response: Call for Applications 2023**

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## **Hamilton's Homeless-Serving System**



October 2023

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### GENERAL INFORMATION

#### Deadline

All proposals must be submitted **electronically** no later than **11:59 PM EST, October 27, 2023** to [homeless.policy@hamilton.ca](mailto:homeless.policy@hamilton.ca).

Proposals shall be submitted in pdf file format, clearly indicating in the subject line the project title:

#### **[Intervention Project Title]– Winter Response Call For Application**

The proposal is required to contain a complete Winter Response Application Form (3 or less of the interventions) and a corresponding completed Budget Template with sufficient detail to form the basis of a contractual agreement. It is the applicant’s responsibility to ensure submissions are complete and that no information is missing. Incomplete submissions will be scored based on the information included.

Proposals arriving after **11:59 PM EST** time on **October 27, 2023** will be automatically rejected. There will be no extension to the deadline for the submission of proposals.

A courtesy email will be sent to the contact named to notify receipt of each proposal. If a proponent does not receive a confirmation email, the City of Hamilton has not received their proposal.

## Communications

Questions or requests must be written and forwarded to [homeless.policy@hamilton.ca](mailto:homeless.policy@hamilton.ca). All inquiries related to this Call for Applications shall be directed to the general mailbox: [homeless.policy@hamilton.ca](mailto:homeless.policy@hamilton.ca). If your inquiry is urgent, please contact 905-546-2424 ext. 4666 for additional support.

Inquiries shall be made no later than **October 27, 2023**. The City of Hamilton reserves the right not to respond to inquiries made after the deadline for questions. Questions will be responded to by 4:00 PM **October 27, 2023**.

Proponents finding discrepancies or omissions in the CFA documents, or having doubts as to the meaning or intent of any provision, shall immediately notify the City of Hamilton by email, [homeless.policy@hamilton.ca](mailto:homeless.policy@hamilton.ca). If the City of Hamilton determines that an amendment is required to this RFP, the addendum will be issued.

No verbal conversation will affect or modify the terms of this CFA or shall be relied upon by any proponent. Information obtained from any person or source other than this CFA or the City of Hamilton website may not be relied upon.

## Important Dates

Call for Applications Issued	October 6, 2023
Deadline for Questions	October 27, 2023
Deadline for Proposals	October 27, 2023
Notification of Proponents Issued	November 3, 2023
Report to Council for Approval	N/A

The City of Hamilton reserves the right to change these dates as needed.

## BACKGROUND

### Summary of Issue

Although capacity was significantly expanded during COVID-19 as a result of Social Service Relief Funding (SSRF), service levels for drop-in services and warming centres for unsheltered individuals were reduced once this funding ended. The current winter response within homeless-serving agencies does not include expanded overnight drop-in warming spaces, but rather relies on existing agencies going into overcapacity and attempting to accommodate a higher number of individuals than (than) they are set up for. However, as emergency shelters are experiencing significant occupancy pressures since the COVID-19 pandemic and continue to face staffing shortages, shelters have limited ability to admit additional users above their normal maximum capacity as a viable option. An ongoing annual Winter Response Strategy will address current system gaps and enable low-barrier overnight warming spaces to meet the needs of individuals unable to access emergency shelter services. Council approved the implementation of an annual Winter Response Strategy along with additional day time drop-in services to provide a more comprehensive approach and higher level of services for drop-in services and overnight warming spaces.

### Summary of Council Direction

Individuals who are unhoused are particularly vulnerable during the winter season. Council recommends immediately expanding access to daytime and overnight warming spaces for the cold weather months from December 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024, and annualizing this response is being deferred to the 2024 budget. Overnight warming spaces provide critical services to meet the level of heightened risk of cold exposure for people who live unsheltered in winter. Daytime drop-ins act as critical services in the homeless serving sector, as they provide supports that meet immediate needs, build trust and connection to additional resources, and offer triage and assessment services that facilitate access to additional housing resources.

The supply of available daytime drop-ins and overnight warming spaces are currently limited. Year-round drop-ins would maintain daytime services while enabling providers to scale-up and expand these spaces for overnight low-barrier warming spaces during winter months, from December 1 to March 31 each year. Warming spaces would be separate and distinct in their service offerings compared to daytime drop-in programs. Specific offerings for warming spaces would include a place to sit, washrooms, warm beverages and light snacks between the hours of 8:30 p.m. until 8:30 a.m. daily. On-site access to other services such as toiletries, wi-fi, showers and laundry may be provisionally accommodated.

The recommended approach leverages partnerships with providers in homelessness serving sector and utilizes City facilities such as recreation facilities and the Central Public Library, as well as maximizing the geographic area by implementing a mobile warming bus. The warming bus requires outreach support staff for overnight shifts, from 10:00 p.m. until 6:00 a.m./7 days per week.

The central piece of the strategy is that staff conduct a Call for Applications to community partners, faith-based organizations, and other potential proponents to contract up to one hundred low-barrier spaces for warming purposes during the winter months. It is critical that new partnerships are explored and pursued as we work together to find needed capacity within our City to serve the needs of unsheltered individuals during the winter months, and year-round.

## **CFA DETAILS**

### **Scope of Requirements**

This CFA only concerns items (i), (ii), and the staffing costs of (iii) of the below approved recommendations from the September 7, 2023 report to the Emergency and Community Services Committee, “Annual Winter Response Strategy (HSC23012(a))”.

That Council approve, and staff be authorized to implement an immediate Winter Response Strategy, from December 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024 to support vulnerable individuals within the homelessness serving systems as follows for an approximate cost of \$1,499,588 and to be funded by the Tax Stabilization Reserve #110046:

- (i) One hundred overnight drop-in spaces through a Call for Application that would function as additional low-barrier overnight winter warming spaces at an approximate cost of \$584,154.
- (ii) The operation of one overnight warming bus through Hamilton Transit, at an approximate cost of \$217,550, which includes approximate operating costs based on the 2023 rate of \$150,000 with staff on site to support individuals experiencing homelessness at a cost of \$67,550 to be contracted through a Call for Application.
- (iii) One hundred daytime drop-in spaces through a Call for Application that would function daily to March 31, 2024 as low-barrier daytime services at an approximate cost of \$584,154.
- (iv) Additional operating hours to 11:30PM at three designated recreation facilities to enable these facilities to operate as warming spaces on statutory holidays and other days the recreation facilities are regularly scheduled to be closed from December 1, 2023 through March 31, 2024 at an approximate cost of \$103,660.
- (v) Additional operating hours at the Hamilton Public Library Central location to operate as a warming space, between 1:00PM - 5:00PM, on ten statutory and other days the library is regularly scheduled to be closed from December 1, 2023 through March 31, 2024, at an approximate annual cost of \$10,070.

## **Eligible Costs**

The following overview of eligible and ineligible uses of funds must be adhered to in order to ensure compliance with municipal expectations.

### **Services Eligible:**

#### Housing-Focused Daytime Drop-In

Housing-focused daytime drop-in includes services and supports that provide relief or protect people who are experiencing homelessness. Prevention and diversion services are offered for those at risk of homelessness. Program solutions are expected to operate from a Housing-First and people-centred approach. It is also expected that there will be an eventual shift from reliance on emergency solutions to preventative services.

Solutions may include:

- Washroom access
- Housing-focused case management
- Access to food and beverages
- Showers
- Laundry
- Harm Reduction
- Programs to prevent homelessness and sustain housing

- Coordinated Access activities (i.e. Assessment Tools)
- HIFIS usage

### Winter Response Overnight Warming Spaces

Winter response overnight warming spaces are to provide basic needs to get out of the cold. Applicants will provide the spaces for up to 100 people and the staffing for safe operation to people experiencing homelessness.

Solutions may include:

- Washroom access
- Chairs
- Warm beverages, light snacks
- Basic toiletries
- Support to gain access to other programs (i.e. shelter)
- Coordinated Access activities (i.e. Assessment Tools)
- HIFIS usage

### Outreach Support Workers

Outreach Support Worker(s) will staff the overnight warming bus provided by Hamilton Transit. Shifts are from 10:00 p.m. until 6:00 a.m., 7 days/week from December 1, 2023 – March 31, 2024. The Outreach Support Worker will provide assistance to people who may choose to ride the bus as a warming shelter or as transportation between drop-ins.

### Administration Costs

Administration costs must not exceed 10% of the budget.

### **Funding Available**

Successful proposals to the CFA will be recommended to City Council. Funding is conditional on approval by City Council for future terms. The term of the contract is contingent upon available funding, which is subject to a change based on government commitments.

Agreements will extend through March 2024 with annual reviews and renewals at the discretion of the City of Hamilton.

Note that funds directed through the CFA process prioritize Winter Response operations and will not be allocated to any capital projects. Applications may support existing programs or new programs.

The City of Hamilton reserves the right to reasonably divide services and enter into one or more Agreements with one or more proponents having regard for the CFA and the basis of proposals. The City also reserves the right to award less funding than requested through a negotiation process with the proponent. Should terms not be agreed upon, the City reserves the right to not enter into an agreement despite a successful submission.

## **Partnership and Matching Funding**

Applicants are encouraged to pursue supplementary matching of funding through other sources (e.g. other governments, foundations, or private donations). These matching sources can include in-kind contributions, such as staff secondments or partnerships to add service value to the program. Proposals that leverage existing community resources and funds are preferred.

## **Performance Management & Reporting**

All applicants must consider how their project contributes to overall system outputs and outcome targets. Note these key performance indicators will be finalized during the contract negotiations.

Successful project(s) will be required to complete and submit monthly data reports, either through a Data Collection Tool or through HIFIS reporting, as directed by City staff.

Therefore, successful project(s) must:

- Utilize the Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS) and City of Hamilton monitoring and required reporting;
- Participate in systems planning initiatives outlined in the Hamilton's Systems Planning Framework to coordinate activities as requested by the City of Hamilton (including HMIS Super User group, HMIS planning, and Coordinated Access planning and meetings); and,
- Have capacity to deliver services to clients on the first day of service contract commencement date.

## **Evaluation**

An internal evaluation committee will review all proposals to determine the proponent(s) which is best suited to deliver these services for the City of Hamilton, guided by the criteria outlined in the application form.

All criteria considered will be applied evenly and fairly to all proposals. The minimum score to be considered is 75%.