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DATE 4 July 1996

TO/DEST. Coordinator
Community Services Committee

FROM/EXP. Social Services Commissioner

SUBJECT/OBJET **RESPONSE TO INQUIRY - SOCIAL SERVICES PROJECT
(ONE-YEAR) GRANTS**

REPORT RECOMMENDATION

That the Community Services Committee receive this report for information.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide information concerning project (one-year) grants administered by the Social Services Department in response to a Councillor's inquiry.

BACKGROUND

The Region has supported creative social services initiatives by providing project (one-year) grants to community organizations and groups since 1971. In addition to grants for Social Services, the Region provides grants to community organizations for programs in arts, economic development, environment and health.

The 1996 budget of \$441,981 for social services project (one-year) grants represents a reduction of 18% from the 1995 budget of \$536,580. A further reduction of 25% or \$110,495 has been proposed for 1997 as a result of the Corporate Review, which would leave \$331,456 for allocation in 1997.

Since last year, the Social Services Department has allocated one year grant funding in a collaborative process with the Regional Health Department, the United Way/Centraide Ottawa-Carleton and the District Health Council. Allocations decisions are made by a committee with representation of funders, Regional councillors, volunteers, clients and agencies. This has allowed a more focused use of funds and joint funding arrangements between the Region and the other funders.

Priorities for one year grants are developed by the community, clients and staff through the Department's strategic planning process.

On April 18, 1996 the Community Services Committee approved the project (one-year) grant funding priorities for 1997 to be:

1. Homelessness
2. Services to ethnic and racial minorities and Aboriginal groups
3. Client-led advocacy

The availability of 1997 grants was advertized on June 1st, 1996 through Window on the Region. Flyers advertizing project funds for health and social services were mailed to 412 community organizations and an information session for agencies was held on June 27, 1996. To date, 90 applications have been requested. The deadline for submission of one year grants is October 1, 1996.

INTRODUCTION

The goals of the Social Services Department in the allocation of project (one-year) grants are as follows:

1. to support the community to develop alternative, creative ways to respond to community priority needs and issues.
2. to support organizations which may have limited/no access to ongoing funding but which provide a service which meets a need or fills a service gap.
3. to support funded agencies to respond to community requests for a time-limited service.
4. to identify emerging community needs and service gaps
5. to encourage partnership and collaboration between community groups
6. to increase access to services

The following examples demonstrate the impact of one year grants in the Region during the last 3 years.

Community Houses

Project grants totalling, on average, \$7,500 each were provided to eight (8) Community Houses in 1996 to support their coordination function (Community Houses also received project funding in previous years). Community Houses are located in public housing communities and provide community based supports and services for residents who are primarily low-income, often marginalized and increasing number of newcomers.

Coordination enables the provision of community programs e.g. health promotion, daily drop-in, parenting classes, recreational programs, arts and crafts and taps into a tremendous amount volunteer work.

Parenting Courses For Immigrants and New Canadians.

A project grant of \$35,000 was allocated jointly to three organizations in 1996; Pinecrest Queensway Health and Community Services, Ottawa-Carleton Immigrant Services Organization and Catholic Family Services. This grant is being used to implement a model of cross cultural parenting which provides training and employment experience for parents and enhances intergenerational family relationships.

This partnership has generated additional services in kind and commitment from other agencies across the Region.

Food Programs

Food Programs initially received project grants from the Region before their transfer into the more stable purchase of service envelope.

Project grants provided an opportunity for Food Programs to demonstrate their need for Regional support.

Aboriginal Women's Support Centre

Projects grants were provided to this organization for the last 3 years in the amounts of \$36,000, \$36,000 and 20,000 towards the Aboriginal family violence programs.

Through this process and recognition of need, the Department has established a partnership between this organization and the Family Service Centre ensuring more stable funding for services for Aboriginal women.

DISCUSSION

If the amount of funding for project (one-year) grants is reduced or eliminated in 1997, the following benefits and consequences have been identified.

- Benefits:
- . cost savings
 - . potential ability to minimize budget reductions in other areas of the Social Services Department budget (e.g. Special Assistance, Supplementary Aid)
 - . potential ability to invest in stable infrastructure of agencies receiving purchase of service funding.

- Consequences:
- . reduced ability to support new partnerships and collaborative efforts
 - . reduced ability to respond to community groups which are attempting to address new and emerging community needs.
 - . reduced flexibility to support creative alternatives to current services
 - . perception by community of reduced access to Regional support
 - . reduced alternative services for clients who are unable to access more “mainstream” services.
 - . increased demands on our funding partner, the United Way/Centraide

COMMENTARY:

Sustaining an effective network of community social services requires both financial stability for existing services as well as a stimulus for new and creative ideas achieved through project funding.

The Department views both funding envelopes; purchase of service and project grants; as being strongly connected and would continue to strive to achieve a balance between the two.

The Department would recommend caution in any further substantial erosion of project grants beyond the reductions proposed in the Corporate Review for 1997. If Council proceeds to further reduce the project grant envelope, some attention should be paid to those anticipated savings remaining, all or in part, within the Community Services envelope.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION:

Due to time constraints in the preparation of this report, an extensive consultation was not done. However, 6 agencies representing the range of services offered in the community, 4 of which currently receive Regional purchase of service funding were consulted.

- There was no consensus on the comments received. Some believe that it is crucial to maintain project grants because they address emerging needs, provide opportunities for redesign, partnerships and creativity. For others, investment in the stability of existing services is a priority. Also it was seen that if manageable, both stability to agencies receiving on-going funding and project grants should be maintained, even if at a reduced level.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATION

The 1996 budget for social services project (one-year) grants is \$441,981 (reduced by 18% from 1995). A further reduction of 25% or \$110,495 has been proposed for 1997 through the Corporate Review, which, if approved, would leave \$331,456 for allocation in 1997.

Approved by:
Dick Stewart
Commissioner