

NO: **R009**

COUNCIL DATE: **January 27, 2020**

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## **REGULAR COUNCIL**

TO: **Mayor & Council**

DATE: **January 21, 2020**

FROM: **General Manager, Parks, Recreation & Culture**

FILE: **1855-04**

SUBJECT: **Application for a Union of BC Municipalities Community Emergency Preparedness Fund Grant**

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## **RECOMMENDATION**

The Parks, Recreation & Culture Department recommend that Council:

1. Receive this report for information; and
2. Authorize staff to submit an application to the Union of BC Municipalities (“UBCM”) Community Emergency Preparedness Fund for an Emergency Support Services (“ESS”) grant in the amount of \$25,000 to support individuals with disabilities, specifically those with Autism Spectrum Disorder (“ASD”) during an emergency.

## **INTENT**

The purpose of this report is to seek Council support for the City, in partnership with the Canucks Autism Network (“CAN”) to apply for a grant under the UBCM Community Emergency Preparedness Fund (“CEPF”) for ESS. Council approval of this application is a requirement of the ESS application criteria.

## **BACKGROUND**

The CEPF is a suite of funding programs intended to enhance the resiliency of local governments and their residents in responding to emergencies. Funding is provided by the Province of BC and is administered by UBCM.

## **DISCUSSION**

Under the Emergency Program Act, municipalities and regional districts are responsible for responding to emergencies in their areas, including providing ESS. British Columbians forced from their homes by fire, floods, earthquakes or other emergencies may receive ESS. Services may include food, lodging, clothing, emotional support, information about the crisis, and family reunification.

The City receives evacuees into reception centres in the event of an emergency; City recreation centres are typically utilized for this purpose. Individuals with ASD may not feel comfortable coming into new or highly stimulating environments such as a reception centre. The goal is to

make the space as comfortable and welcoming as possible for our residents who live with ASD or who have other sensory sensitivities.

Staff have prepared an application in partnership with CAN for funding in the amount of \$25,000 from the UBCM CEPF for ESS. This initiative will enable the City and key stakeholders to support individuals with ASD during an emergency.

### **Community Emergency Preparedness Fund (“CEPF”) – Emergency Support Services**

The overall goals of the project are to:

- Build local capacity to provide ESS to individuals with autism through training, volunteer recruitment, and the purchase of specialized sensory equipment;
- Create a training video for ESS responders for assisting someone with autism in during an evacuation;
- Create a set of downloadable tools, including picture symbols and social stories, for caregivers to help prepare for an emergency or to use during an emergency activation;
- Purchase supplies for sensory friendly spaces in reception centres. A sensory friendly space is a calm and quiet area designed to create a supportive environment for individuals who have ASD, anxiety or other sensory-processing needs. The spaces include bean bag chairs, sensory toys, picture communication tools and items designed to calm down the senses when someone is overstimulated;
- Purchase supplies for sensory friendly kits which include noise cancelling headphones to be used when a sensory friendly space is not possible; and
- Create a series of best practices and trainings to be integrated with the Justice Institute of BC’s emergency preparedness training modules demonstrating Surrey’s leadership in accessibility and ESS.

The City will be the first city in Canada to adopt ASD specific resources for ESS. The City values the commitment to supporting all persons and to reduce barriers to program participation. This proposed assessment and ESS funding would contribute to prevention of isolation and support individuals with ASD during emergency activations.

### **Finance Review**

The Finance Department has reviewed this report and has no concerns.

### **SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS**

The application for a UBCM Emergency Support Services Grant supports the objectives of the City’s Sustainability Charter 2.0. In particular, this initiative relates to Sustainability Charter 2.0 themes of Public Safety and Health & Wellness. Specifically, the initiative supports the following Desired Outcomes (“DO”) and Strategic Directions (“SD”):

- Emergency Preparedness and Prevention – DO6: Surrey has proactive and coordinated emergency prevention measures in place, and can effectively deal with emergencies that arise;
- Emergency Preparedness and Prevention – SD5: Build community resilience and capacity to respond effectively in an emergency;

- Emergency Preparedness and Prevention – SD7: Strengthen and lead in localized emergency planning and response, including updating and developing needed recovery plans; and
- Health Services and Programs – DO5: Services and programs are responsive to shifting health and social needs, and local and external factors.

## CONCLUSION

Under the Emergency Program Act, municipalities and regional districts are responsible for responding to emergencies in their area. The CEPF funding outlined above will enhance the resiliency of Surrey in responding to emergencies through EOC training and emergency route planning. As part of the application process, local government Council resolution indicating support for the proposed activities is required. It is recommended that Council authorize the submission of application for this grant of \$25,000 each to assist residents with ASD who have been displaced from their homes by fire, floods, earthquakes or, other emergencies.

Laurie Cavan  
General Manager  
Parks, Recreation & Culture