



## ***Position Paper Regarding the Evaluation of Day Services in Hamilton***

The City of Hamilton's Housing Services Division has completed an evaluation of day services for people in Hamilton who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. The following is a summary of the City's approach in advancing the findings of the review.

### **Background**

In 2013, the City of Hamilton Housing Services Division hired Paul Dowling & Associates to conduct an evaluation of day services in Hamilton. The purpose of the evaluation was to analyze and review day services for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

A mixed-methods approach was used to complete a series of information gathering activities that included:

- Web research;
- Academic and community-based literature;
- Key stakeholders interviews;
- A community survey;
- Day services site visits.

In total, 33 interviews, site visits and focus groups were completed with 79 community experts. The process culminated with a report back to the City of Hamilton's Day Services Task Force and to the broader community in the fall of 2013.

### **Evaluation Summary**

The findings of the evaluation revealed the primary challenge in coordinating day services in Hamilton was the need for a common local understanding and definition of day service. The report defines day service as,

“A space that allows people to come in without an appointment or application and spend time socializing, meeting their basic needs, and, at their own discretion, access specialized services designed to meet the needs of people who are homeless or at risk of losing their housing. These ‘services’ can include, but are not limited to; drop-in/day programs, therapeutic programs, recreational programming, shelter services, religious outreach and meal programs.”

– *City of Hamilton, Day Services Evaluation (2013)*

The scope of the evaluation includes three main components. The first is a comprehensive Inventory and Analysis of Day Services in Hamilton which quantifies

and begins to organize a set of local services. A Best Practices Report was completed which provides context to situate Hamilton's day services within a framework of promising practices and standards for day services in other jurisdictions. The Final Report includes recommendations to address service gaps and find opportunities to maximize community resources. Appended to this paper is the Final Report which is intended for wide distribution.

## **Next Steps**

The City of Hamilton Housing Services Division acknowledges that day services are a valuable component of the service system for housing and homelessness in Hamilton. Contained within the Final Report is a detailed definition of day services in Hamilton which is considered a useful framework for further planning and discussion.

Using the findings of the report as a foundational document, the City in partnership with community services and agencies will consider the place of day services within its portfolio of homelessness prevention services and interventions. This work will be part of the third phase of planning for services under the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI).

Phase Three of the CHPI review<sup>1</sup> is focused on reviewing homelessness prevention, which means the activities and interventions that work to address the risk factors that cause homelessness. The review focuses on determining the most effective approaches in preventing homelessness and to ensure the best possible investment of CHPI and Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) funding. The findings and recommendations from this CHPI review will be presented to the Emergency and Community Services (E&CS) Committee for consideration in September 2014.

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<sup>1</sup> For more information on the City of Hamilton's work on Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI) and its ongoing review please refer to Report [CS13017a](#) which was approved by the City of Hamilton's Emergency and Community Services Committee on the November 25, 2013.