



**City of Kingston  
Information Report to Council  
Report Number 16-147**

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**To:** Mayor and Members of Council  
**From:** Lanie Hurdle, Commissioner, Community Services  
**Resource Staff:** Sheldon Laidman, Director, Housing & Social Services  
**Date of Meeting:** May 3, 2016  
**Subject:** United Way – City of Kingston Joint Youth Homelessness Initiatives

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**Executive Summary:**

United Way, as the designated Federal Homelessness Prevention Strategy entity for the Region, and the Housing & Social Services Department, as the Service Manager for the City of Kingston and the County of Frontenac, are working collaboratively to end youth homelessness. The City's 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan and the United Way's Youth Out Loud initiative have been purposely aligned.

Youth Out Loud Kingston and area is a collective impact initiative, coordinated through the United Way. The plan to end youth homelessness in Kingston and area is informed by the voice of youth, with a steering committee to develop and oversee implementation of the plan (<http://www.unitedwaykfla.ca/programs/youth-homelessness>).

It has been recognized that to assist youth who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, the same approach that is taken to address adult homelessness does not work well. With youth a stronger emphasis is placed on homelessness prevention and housing that meets the needs of youth, as opposed to focusing on those who are already homeless. All youth who are either at risk of homelessness as well as those who are homeless are assigned a housing first case manager in the City's homeless service system. To assist in this approach, the City of Kingston and United Way have partnered on a number of programs and initiatives.

The City funded homelessness programs delivered to youth are in line with the vision in the United Way's Youth Out Loud initiative. The City and United Way staff have consulted with one another on strategies and funding related to youth homelessness. Both organizations have worked closely together to ensure that youth services are aligned and that there is no funding duplication.

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This report informs Council of the creative campaign being launched to raise awareness about the issue of youth homelessness. It also provides information on partnerships between the City and United Way related to youth homelessness.

**Recommendations:**

This report is for information purposes only.

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**Authorizing Signatures:**

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY COMMISSIONER

**Lanie Hurdle, Commissioner, Community Services**

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

**Gerard Hunt, Chief Administrative Officer**

**Consultation with the following Members of the Corporate Management Team:**

Cynthia Beach, Corporate & Strategic Initiatives	Not required
Denis Leger, Transportation, Facilities & Emergency Services	Not required
Jim Keech, President and CEO, Utilities Kingston	Not required
Desiree Kennedy, Chief Financial Officer & City Treasurer	Not required

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**Options/Discussion:**

The plan to end youth homelessness in Kingston and area is informed by the voice of youth, through a steering committee. Conversations with youth indicated the primary reasons youth are homeless are:

- Family conflict
- Mental health and addictions
- Employment and skills development

The steering committee, with input from youth, has developed strategies to address the issue:

1. Homelessness Prevention
2. Integrated system of care
3. Housing that meets the needs of youth
4. Regional plans including rural homelessness in Frontenac (and L&A)

**Education & Awareness:**

Comprehensive strategies and a creative campaign has been developed to increase education and awareness about the issue of youth homelessness. Launching in May 2016, the campaign will have a direct impact on homelessness prevention for youth by immediately helping at-risk youth seek and secure help, providing information to younger children and youth to prevent future homelessness, and changing community attitudes positively.

The campaign features stories of local youth who have experienced homelessness and how they have successfully obtained support from community organizations. It targets 3 main audiences and strategies, including:

- Targeted intervention for youth at risk or who are homeless (16-24 yrs)
- Increased awareness for youth beginning in grade group (12+ yrs)
- Reducing stigma among the general public

Through the many youth stories, innovative collateral materials and a collaborative approach with diverse community partners, this campaign provides opportunities for education, increased empathy and understanding among all intended audiences.

**Enhanced and Joint Programs**

United Way set aside funds from the Kingston Penitentiary Tours for youth homelessness and used this to fund some additional pilot programs to complement the stable funding provided by the City of Kingston and United Way. New pilot positions include:

- A family mediation worker based out of Kingston Youth Shelter to work with families and youth to address conflict keep the youth housed
- A youth worker based out of Addictions & Mental Health Frontenac, L&A to support youth where they are at and help them access the mental health system
- Support for the transitional/supported youth housing on Yonge Street

Recognizing some youth need intensive supports before being permanently housed, more supported/transitional housing was identified as a need. Currently Home Base Housing and

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Kingston Youth Shelter have supported housing, including a new home being funded by a private donor.

The City, the United Way and other funders jointly support the Kingston Youth Shelter to ensure that homeless youth have a safe place to stay and the service supports they need to help them exit homelessness, preventing their entry into adulthood without homes.

The City is engaged with the United Way and its other partners, including a City-funded new Youth Systems Coordinator at Home Base Housing, to create a Housing and Homelessness Services System (HHSS) which has an integrated, youth-specific stream of services designed to meet the unique needs of homeless and near homeless youth. Consistent with evidence-informed practice, the youth services system emphasizes homelessness prevention.

### **Youth Council**

The United Way coordinates a youth council with youth from schools, Y2K, shelters, and other youth services. Youth Council provides input and supports the implementation of specific strategies. They were instrumental in a recent meeting with school counsellors related to employment programs and will be facilitating an annual youth forum on homelessness.

### **Youth Employment**

The City of Kingston and United Way are working with a taskforce to develop strategies for youth employment. This report will be brought to City Council in 2016.

### **Youth Hub**

Recently, some youth service providers in the community, including Kingston Home Base Housing, Kingston Employment Youth Services (KEYS), Addiction & Mental Health (AMHS – KFLA), Kingston Community Health Centre, Kingston Community Counseling Services (K3C), Girls Inc., Youth Diversion, Kingston Youth Shelter, Kingston Community Living and Voice of Youth have begun discussions around the benefits of co-locating services to support youth. A consultant was retained to assist in the visioning and service planning. This process is still in its early stage and will be connected to other strategies such as the Youth Strategy and the Youth Employment Strategy.

Best practice in serving youth suggests that co-locating services is more effective due to youth's preferences for one stop shopping and youth not knowing where to go when they need help. Due to the realities of youth homelessness, such as barriers to transportation, lack of knowledge of services and programs, lack of finances, and present orientation, it is felt that such a model would be particularly effective in serving this population.

### **Existing Policy/By-Law:**

10 Year Municipal Housing and Homelessness Plan

### **Notice Provisions:**

Not applicable

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**Accessibility Considerations:**

Not applicable

**Financial Considerations:**

Not applicable

**Contacts:**

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**Other City of Kingston Staff Consulted:**

Lee Campbell, Manager, Housing and Childcare Programs

Valerie Watson, Housing Programs Administrator

**Others Consulted**

Bhavana Varma, President & CEO, United Way KFLA

**Exhibits:**

Not applicable