



**City of Kingston
Report to Council
Report Number 18-075**

To: Mayor and Members of Council
From: Lanie Hurdle, Commissioner, Community Services
Resource Staff: Sheldon Laidman, Director, Housing & Social Services
Date of Meeting: April 17, 2018
Subject: Award of Contract - EarlyON Child and Family Centres, City of Kingston and County of Frontenac

Executive Summary:

This report provides recommendations and the rationale related to the award of service agreements for the EarlyON Child and Family Centres, City of Kingston and County of Frontenac, as well as information regarding the current status of this new program.

Effective January 1, 2018, the Province delegated to the Consolidated Municipal Service Managers (CMSM) across the province the authority to implement the transformation of existing early year's child and family programs to an integrated, cohesive system of services and supports known as EarlyON Child and Family Centres. The City of Kingston, as the CMSM for the City of Kingston and the County of Frontenac, received funding from the Government of Canada and the Province of Ontario in the amount of \$2.85 million annually to ensure the provision of EarlyON programs, as part of its oversight and support for the overall management of child care and other human services. EarlyON Centres are legislated under the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014 and are required to deliver mandatory core services which are related to engaging parents and caregivers; supporting early learning and development; and making connections for families.

The CMSM, with the assistance of DPRA Consulting, developed an Initial Service Plan for EarlyON Child and Family Centres (the Plan) to guide this transformation. Council approved the Plan through [Report Number 18-011](#) on December 5, 2017. The Plan identified the service delivery model as a purchase of service agreement consistent with the City's Purchasing By-Law. The CMSM issued a Request for Information (RFI) and a subsequent Request for Proposal (RFP). All five proponents responding to the RFI subsequently submitted a more detailed proposal through the RFP which closed on February 14, 2018. At the time of submission, three of the five proponents were currently providing early years programming

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under the name of Better Beginnings, Better Futures; or Ontario Early Years Centres. Submissions were rated using three pre-determined and weighted scoring criteria:

- Ability of the Organization to Implement and Deliver High Quality EarlyON Child and Family Centres (75 points)
- Costing Analysis (22 points)
- Accessibility for Ontario Disability Act (AODA) (3 points)

Staff are recommending that the CMSM enter into negotiations with the top three ranked proponents: Northern Frontenac Community Services Corporation (also known as Rural Frontenac Community Services), Kingston Community Health Centres and the Boys & Girls Club of Kingston and Area. The other two submissions, from the YMCA of Kingston and Limestone Advisory for Childcare Programs, did not exceed the scoring threshold for consideration and therefore are not being recommended as EarlyON providers under this RFP.

The approved service providers will work with the CMSM to secure sites for the operation of EarlyON Child and Family Centres throughout Kingston and the County of Frontenac. Negotiations will finalize funding allocations, service expectations, targets for each service provider as well as any one-time start-up costs. The term of the service agreements is proposed to be from July 1, 2018 to December 31, 2021.

This report is time sensitive in order to ensure the approved service providers have sufficient time to implement a smooth transition from the current system of early year's programs to the new integrated EarlyON Child and Family Centres.

Recommendation:

That Council authorize the Commissioner, Community Services, or his/her delegate to negotiate and enter into multi-year service agreements for the term of July 1, 2018 to December 31, 2021 to the satisfaction of the Director of Legal Services with the following parties for the delivery of EarlyON Child and Family Centre programs:

- a) Northern Frontenac Community Services Corporation to provide EarlyON services in the County of Frontenac but not including Howe and Wolfe Islands;
- b) Kingston Community Health Centres to provide EarlyON services in the City of Kingston, including Frontenac Islands, in collaboration and coordination with the Boys & Girls Club of Kingston and Area;
- c) The Boys & Girls Club of Kingston and Area to provide EarlyON services in the City of Kingston including Frontenac Islands, in collaboration and coordination with Kingston Community Health Centres; and

That Council approve the allocation of \$2.85 million received annually by the City from the Government of Canada and the Province of Ontario for EarlyON Child and Family Centres as follows:

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- d) Approximately \$2.4 million annually to Northern Frontenac Community Services Corporation, Kingston Community Health Centres and the Boys & Girls Club of Kingston and Area with the exact amounts provided to each organization determined as a part of the negotiation of service agreements and all funds be directed to eligible expenses consistent with the Province's funding guidelines and the submitted Requests for Proposal;
- e) The remainder of the funds be retained by the City for administration (allowable at 10% of total funding), data analysis and planning (both of which are a Ministry requirement), system capacity and professional learning; and

That Council authorize the Commissioner, Community Services, or his/her delegate to use a portion of the funding retained by the City to assist with wind-down costs for those organizations (Limestone Advisory for Childcare Programs; Limestone District School board and the Algonquin & Lakeshore Catholic District School Board) currently operating early years programs and whose agreements expire with the City effective June 30, 2018.

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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:

Jim Keech, President & CEO, Utilities Kingston	Not required
Desirée Kennedy, Chief Financial Officer & City Treasurer	√
Denis Leger, Commissioner, Corporate & Emergency Services	√

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Options/Discussion:

In February 2016, the Ministry of Education announced its intention to transform existing early years child and family programs into an increasingly integrated, cohesive system of services and supports known as EarlyON Child and Family Centres. The Ministry delegated the authority to implement this transformation to municipalities effective January 1, 2018. The CMSMs across the province received funding from the Government of Canada and the Province of Ontario to provide EarlyON programs and services.

The program is intended to enhance parent and caregiver well-being, enrich adult-child interactions and to support parents and caregivers in their role as their child's first teacher. EarlyON programs and services are available to all children (birth through 6) and their families/caregivers at no charge employing a drop-in model at designated EarlyON sites during the week and on weekends.

In preparation for the new responsibility of system design and oversight, the Housing & Social Services Department developed a Plan that identified the recommended service delivery model to be a purchase of service agreement consistent with the City's Purchasing By-Law.

The CMSM issued an RFI (F32-CSG-HSS-2017) on December 22, 2017 and a subsequent RFP (F31-CSG-HSS-2018-1) was issued on January 22, 2018 with a closing date of February 14, 2018, to determine which organizations would be awarded the service agreement to provide early years programming under the new EarlyON framework. Five (5) organizations who responded to the RFI qualified and were invited by the CMSM to respond to the RFP.

The CMSM has service agreements ending June 2018 with those organizations that have been providing early year's child and family programming in Kingston and Frontenac through contracts directly with the Ministry of Education. The five organizations are:

- Limestone Advisory for Child Care Programs operated Ontario Early Years for Kingston and the Islands;
- Northern Frontenac Community Services Corporation operated Ontario Early Years for Frontenac;
- Kingston Community Health Centres operated Better Beginnings, Better Futures;
- Limestone District School Board operated Parenting and Family Literacy Centres; and
- Algonquin & Lakeshore District School Board operated Parenting and Family Literacy Centres.

In addition to seeking organizations to provide EarlyON programs across the CMSM area, the RFI was structured to encourage Francophone and Indigenous organizations to apply under dedicated service streams, thus allowing a more targeted approach. No organization submitted an RFI to deliver Francophone or Indigenous services. As Kingston is a designated French Language area under the *French Language Services Act*, the CMSM reached out to Francophone school boards and organizations. While offering their support and willingness to work with the CMSM informally, there was not an interest in offering a Francophone EarlyON Centre directly. Both of the recommended proponents, Kingston Community Health Centres and the Boys & Girls Club of Kingston & Area, and the CMSM have had preliminary discussions with

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local and regional community agencies that offer Francophone programs and services. These discussions will be further advanced to address local needs once the service contracts are awarded. The CMSM is confident that suitable options are available to properly service the Francophone population.

During the RFI/RFP process, the CMSM learned that it had been approved for funding as part of a tri-CMSM (City of Kingston, County of Hastings and Lennox & Addington County) arrangement for Indigenous programming with the Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte (MBQ). The KAHWA:TSIRE Child and Family Program will increase access to culturally relevant early years programs and services and will work directly with EarlyON Child and Family Centres staff in providing support, resources, and direct delivery of Indigenous child and family programs and services. In Kingston and the County of Frontenac, the initial areas to be targeted for Indigenous programming are Sharbot Lake and Central/North Kingston. Approximately one full-time equivalent staff from MBQ will be assigned to serve the City of Kingston and the County of Frontenac.

Staff from the Housing & Social Services Department formed an Evaluation Committee to review the RFP submissions. The three evaluation criteria and associated weighting were included in the RFP document. The criteria and the maximum points available are listed below:

- Ability of the Organization to Implement and Deliver High Quality EarlyON Child and Family Centres – a maximum of 75 points broken down into sub-categories for the purposes of scoring: organizational competence (15 points); program delivery competence (40 points); community and family relationships (10 points); and implementation planning and readiness (10 points);
- Costing Analysis (a maximum of 22 points out of 100 total points) based on “Operating Cost per Direct Service Hour” with mileage and leasing costs excluded to ensure a fair comparison; and
- Accessibility for Ontario Disability Act (AODA) – a maximum of 3 points.

The RFP required the proponents in their submission to refer to the Initial Service Plan: EarlyON Child and Family Centres (the Plan) and identify the areas (Exhibit A to Report Number 18-075) that they propose to operate, hours of operation and staffing complement.

The RFP was also sensitive to ensuring costing comparisons that neutralized the impacts of geography and resultant mileage costs, site leasing costs and start-up costs. These costs were excluded from the RFP and would be negotiated as part of the service agreements. Costing was solely based on staff compensation, program operating expenses and administration expenses for their proposed sites.

The Evaluation Committee conducted interviews with all five organizations before recommendations were finalized.

Evaluation of Submissions

The highest scoring submissions demonstrated a keen understanding of the mandatory core services, the pedagogy of “How Learning Happens” and had a solid implementation plan. They demonstrated a strong infrastructure and serve as community hubs with a range of value added

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services and available space accessible to young children and families. Their pricing was competitive and the submission reflected a solid rationale for that pricing. Organizations that ranked lower did so for one of two reasons - pricing was not competitive and/or they failed to clearly demonstrate the organization’s readiness to implement and deliver high quality EarlyON Child and Family Centres.

Summary of Scores, Rank and Service Area by Zones

In the table below, column 1 shows the total weighted score out of 100 available points listed for each proponent who submitted a proposal; column 2 shows the rank based on these scores with 1 being the highest and 5 being the lowest; column 3 indicates the zones or geographic area that the proponents choose to operate EarlyON programs; and column 4 shows the zones recommended by the Evaluation Team.

Proponents	Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4
	Score out of 100	Rank	Zones in RFP	Zones Recommended
Rural Frontenac Community Services (applied to only serve the County of Frontenac)	88.8	1	1, 2	1, 2
Kingston Community Health Centres	73.0	2	3, 4, 5, 6, 7	3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and the new 8 to be shared
Boys & Girls Club	71.0	3	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	
Limestone Child Care Advisory	61.2	4	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	_____
YMCA of Kingston	60.0	5	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and a Purchase of Service (POS) in 1	_____

Northern Frontenac Community Services Corporation (NFCS) achieved the highest score and ranked first overall. The organization, in their written submission and in their follow-up interview, demonstrated a strong competence to deliver the EarlyON Centres. The organization was selected to operate exclusively in the County of Frontenac where they have a strong presence and community connections. It is recommended to enter into negotiations with NFCS to operate EarlyOn Centres in the County of Frontenac - Zones 1 and 2, excluding Wolfe and Howe Islands. Negotiations will need to include consideration of the unique challenges and costs related to serving a very rural, dispersed community.

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Kingston Community Health Centres and the Boys & Girls Club of Kingston and Area are the two top ranking organizations proposing to serve the City of Kingston with total overall scores within two points of one another. Each organization presents a unique profile. Kingston Community Health Centres is a multi-service organization with a known record for meeting the health and related needs of a more marginalized population largely from the North end. Currently, they are a provider of Better Beginnings, Better Futures and have the staff, the expertise and the reputation to operate EarlyON Child and Family Centres more broadly. The Boys & Girls Club of Kingston and Area is known for its child and youth programs operated from a recreation perspective. It operates a "Little Learners" program serving toddlers and their families which would be integrated with the EarlyON programs and services. Children and families who would attend EarlyON programs would be encouraged to access the myriad of recreation/social programs they offer at their two main sites - Boys & Girls West (on Bath Road) and the Robert Meek Centre (Bagot Street).

After careful consideration and examination of the potential benefits for families of having two service providers in the City of Kingston, staff are recommending the splitting of the contract so that both Kingston Community Health Centres and the Boys & Girls Club of Kingston and Area operate EarlyON Child and Family Centres in the City. While the mandatory core services for EarlyON programs are prescribed by the Province, the organizational culture in which they are delivered influence the experience for children and families. Kingston Community Health Centres is primarily a health organization and provides their services through a health lens while the Boys & Girls Club of Kingston and Area provides programs in a recreational context. The opportunities for coordination and collaboration between these two strong providers will achieve benefits for the EarlyON Child and Family system across the City. Specificity around the City zones served and the expectations around collaboration and cooperation will be jointly developed with the CMSM and the two organizations as part of the negotiation of service agreements.

The CMSM will develop, with the three recommended service providers, a system of supports, policies and practices, and shared reporting expectations.

Two organizations scored significantly less than the top three submissions - Limestone Advisory for Child Care Programs and the YMCA of Kingston. Limestone Advisory for Childcare Programs is currently a provider of Ontario Early Years for Kingston and the Islands. While their score for the category "Ability of the Organization to Implement and Deliver High Quality EarlyON Child and Family Centres" was competitive, their cost per direct service hour was significantly higher than all the other proponents resulting in an overall score of 61.2. The YMCA of Kingston scored a total of 60 points overall. In the Team's evaluation of the category "Ability of the Organization to Implement and Deliver High Quality EarlyON Child and Family Centres" they scored significantly below the other proponents.

Next Steps

The CMSM has completed preliminary work to identify and secure potential sites for the operation of EarlyON Child and Family Centres. Commitments of space in schools, recreation/community centres and libraries have been obtained. The CMSM has identified the need for approximately 20 sites with varying hours of operation dispersed throughout the county

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and City. The CMSM recognizes that site locations and hours may need adjustment throughout the term of the service agreements as utilization trends are monitored and analyzed.

Once the successful proponents are confirmed, the CMSM will proceed to confirm sites already identified or consider additional sites including those that each of the organizations have identified within their own buildings. One-time funding required for start-up costs to site locations will be identified and supported where feasible. In addition, the CMSM has applied to the Ministry for additional funding to support major and minor capital for new EarlyON site locations. At the time of writing this report, the Ministry had not communicated funding approvals for capital costs.

The CMSM has been working to update the City's website with general information on EarlyOn programs and services. With the service providers confirmed, the CMSM will be able to include more detailed information about providers, locations and hours that will be helpful to families and caregivers and reassure them that their early years programs will continue but within a more accessible, integrated and cohesive system of services.

Existing Policy/By-Law:

Initial Service Plan for EarlyON Child and Family Centres in Kingston and the County of Frontenac (approved by Council December 2017)

Notice Provisions:

Not applicable

Accessibility Considerations:

Not applicable

Financial Considerations:

The Government of Canada and the Province of Ontario committed to providing funding to the City of Kingston in the amount of \$2.85 million annually for EarlyON Child and Family Centres in the City of Kingston and County of Frontenac. The commitment at this funding level is for the years 2018 and 2019 and is based on the previous operating allocation with additional funding for data analysis services, planning and administration oversight. Future allocations will be based on the Ministry's funding formula which will be similar to the current childcare funding formula. It is anticipated that EarlyON allocations for this area may be adjusted downward in the year 2020 and beyond based on the funding formula rather than being based on the historical allocations as it is now. The CMSM is confident that by allocating the maximum of 10% of total funds received to internal administration costs, a reduction in funding, if it should occur, could be managed without a corresponding reduction in services. The maximum has been allocated in the current program budget to account for administration costs related to initial planning and system oversight that are more costly in the first few years of a new program of this size.

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Based on the current allocation, the CMSM has developed a program budget which ensures the funds expensed during the term of the service agreements will not exceed the funding received from the Government of Canada and Province of Ontario.

In 2018, a total of \$1,053,719 has been committed to fund the operations of the existing early years child and family programs to June 30, 2018. For the period of July 1 to December 31, 2018, a budget of \$1,224,064 is proposed to fund the operating costs of the three recommended service providers - Northern Frontenac Community Services, Kingston Community Health Centres and the Boys & Girls Club of Kingston and Area. This would bring the total operating costs dispersed to service providers to \$2,277,783; representing an increase over the 2017 year. In 2018, the budget includes funding for start-up expenses such as the purchase of play equipment, program furniture and supplies for over twenty EarlyON sites. The CMSM is committed to assisting with wind down costs for those agencies which are currently offering early years child and family services but were not successful in the RFP process. This is also reflected in the proposed budget for 2018.

The annualized budget for the remaining term of the service agreements (2019 through to 2021) allocates to service providers approximately \$2.4 million, increasing funding to the system by over \$400,000 over the 2017 year. The funding will allow the successful proponents to provide over 18,000 hours annually of high quality EarlyON programming to children (0 to 6), their families and caregivers in over twenty sites throughout Kingston and the County of Frontenac.

All costs can be accommodated within the funding provided by senior levels of government and no municipal contribution is anticipated.

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Other City of Kingston Staff Consulted:

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Exhibits Attached:

Exhibit A Boundaries and Priority Zones

EarlyON Updated EarlyON Regions and Priority Planning Zones
Child and Family Centre

