MEDIA RELEASE: Friday, February 22, 2013, 4:30 p.m.

REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF WATERLOO
COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE
AGENDA

Tuesday, February 26, 2013
12:00 p.m.
(Time is approximate: immediately following Administration and Finance Committee)
Regional Council Chamber
150 Frederick Street, Kitchener

1. DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST UNDER THE MUNICIPAL CONFLICT OF INTEREST ACT

2. DELEGATIONS

CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS
Items on the Consent Agenda can be approved in one motion of Committee to save time. Prior to the motion being voted on, any member of Committee may request that one or more of the items be removed from the Consent Agenda and voted on separately.

3. REQUEST TO REMOVE ITEMS FROM CONSENT AGENDA

4. MOTION TO APPROVE ITEMS OR RECEIVE FOR INFORMATION

a) SS-13-009, Waterloo Region Energy Assistance Program Update (Information) 1

INFORMATION/CORRESPONDENCE

b) Ministry of Health and Long Term Care: Public Health Funding Review Update 22
c) Memo: First Response Protocol 2012 Update 24
d) Ministry of Children and Youth Services: The Ontario Early Years Policy Framework (Attachment distributed to Councillors only) 27
e) Memo: Ontario Works Caseload: January 2013 52
f) Accreditation Canada: Sunnyside Home Accreditation 54

REGULAR AGENDA RESUMES

5. REPORTS – PUBLIC HEALTH

a) PH-13-007, 2013 School Suspension Update 55
REPORTS – SOCIAL SERVICES

b) SS-13-010, Immigration Partnership – Waterloo Region 58

6. OTHER BUSINESS

a) Council Enquiries and Requests for Information Tracking List 61

7. NEXT MEETING – March 19, 2013

8. ADJOURN
TO: Chair Sean Strickland and Members of the Community Services Committee

DATE: February 26, 2013

FILE CODE: S13-30

SUBJECT: WATERLOO REGION ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM UPDATE

RECOMMENDATION:

For information

SUMMARY:

This report provides an update on the Waterloo Region Energy Assistance Program, sharing highlights from the 2012 annual program report (attached as Appendix A). The Program report includes program data from 2012, provides information on energy trends and policy and program changes impacting low income households, and identifies program plans for 2013.

REPORT:

1.0 Background

An inability to pay utility bills is one of the indicators of housing instability. In Waterloo Region, several energy assistance programs have operated in a partnership model since the 2002/2003 heating season, ensuring programs are working together to respond to community need. The Waterloo Region Energy Assistance Program is an award winning program (memo June 21, 2011) which offers energy assistance to prevent housing instability and homelessness in Waterloo Region.

Region Social Services administers and delivers the funding locally on behalf of the partnership. For 2012, the Program partnership included the following:

1. Waterloo Region Social Services Energy Assistance:
   - For Ontario Works recipients: Assistance was provided through the Community Start Up and Maintenance Benefit (CSUMB) and Discretionary Benefits. Funding was cost-shared on an 82.8/17.2 basis between the Province and the Region. This assistance was available year-round.
   - For individuals not receiving Ontario Works: Assistance was provided to Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) recipients through Discretionary Benefits and to others in need through Emergency funds. Funding was cost-shared on an 82.8/17.2 basis between the Province and the Region. This assistance was available year-round.

2. Corporate Partner Fund:
   - Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LEAP): Funding is provided by local utility companies including: Cambridge and North Dumfries Hydro, Kitchener-Wilmot Hydro, Kitchener Utilities, and Waterloo North Hydro. The amount of funding is calculated annually at 0.12% of the companies’ revenues and is available from January 1st until funds are exhausted.
Lawsuit Settlement Fund: Funding is available through a class action lawsuit settlement administered through United Way of Greater Toronto. In Waterloo Region, the utilities involved are: Cambridge and North Dumfries Hydro, Kitchener-Wilmot Hydro, and Waterloo North Hydro. Funding is available as needed until all funds are exhausted.

3. Winter Warmth:
   Funding is provided by Union Gas in partnership with the United Way of Cambridge and North Dumfries and the United Way of Kitchener-Waterloo for low-income Union Gas customers. Funding through a lawsuit settlement involving Union Gas is also included in the Winter Warmth program and is available from January 1st until funds are exhausted.

4. Provincial Emergency Energy Fund:
   Funding was provided 100% from the Province through the Ministry of Community and Social Services and was available from January 1st until funds were exhausted.

The program is accessed through the Region’s Employment and Income Support Division. Those on Ontario Works speak with their caseworker and all others contact the intake line.

2.0 Waterloo Region Energy Assistance Program Report 2012

The full report is attached as Appendix A. Highlights from the report are included below.

There has been almost a 60% increase in the price of electricity over the past five years (2008-2012). Over this same time period, there has been an overall average decrease in natural gas rates of just over 60%. Fluctuating prices can make it difficult for households with low-income.

In 2012, several changes were initiated by the Province that will impact the Waterloo Region Energy Assistance Program funding structure and levels for 2013. These changes include the capping of Discretionary Benefits, the elimination of the Community Start Up and Maintenance Benefit, the consolidation of the Provincial Emergency Energy Fund into the new Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative along with the one-time transition funds provided to the Region for 2013/14. Information on these changes has been previously provided to Council through the 2013 budget process and/or Committee reports (SS-12-044, SS-12-050, and SS-13-001). Reduced provincial funding through Discretionary Benefits and Community Start Up and Maintenance Benefit has been mitigated somewhat in the Waterloo Region Energy Assistance Program for 2013 with the one-time transition funds, additional funding provided by Council for Discretionary Benefits, and further refinement of Program criteria.

Program data\(^1\) highlights for 2012 include:
- A total of 562 households in the Region received assistance through WREAP.
- $207,739 total dollars were distributed to low-income consumers.
- The average assistance received was $401 per household.
- 63% of households assisted were families with children, a 2% decrease from 2011.
- 37% of households assisted were singles and couples, a 36% increase from 2011.
- 53% of households were located in Kitchener, 30% in Cambridge, 12% in Waterloo, and 5% in the Townships.

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\(^1\) Data from Waterloo Region Social Services Energy Assistance (i.e. Discretionary Benefits and CSUMB for OW and ODSP recipients) is not included as it was not accessible in the format required for this report through the current database technology. Note that this is the largest source of energy assistance.
3.0 Next Steps

The 2012 Waterloo Region Energy Assistance Program report will be shared with Program partners. Several significant trends, program and policy changes were noted in this report. To keep apprised of the recent changes and to ensure continued effectiveness of the WREAP in assisting low-income households with energy arrears, the following next steps are planned to be completed by Region staff for 2013:

- Meet with Utility Partners in early 2013 to discuss WREAP 2012 findings and plans for 2013.
- Continue to promote the saveONenergy program.
- Monitor funding levels and assess how recent funding changes affect the WREAP program.
- Continue to prepare WREAP annual reports and bring to Council for information.

CORPORATE STRATEGIC PLAN:

Energy assistance programs support housing stability. Working to end homelessness in Waterloo Region is consistent with the Region’s Corporate Strategic Plan (2011-2014), Focus Area 4: Healthy and Inclusive Communities: to “reduce inequities and enhance community health, safety, inclusion and quality of life”; and specifically, Strategic Objective 4.5 to “work collaboratively to increase the supply and range of affordable housing and reduce homelessness”.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

The Region’s Provincial Emergency Energy Fund was provided through 100% Provincial dollars. Contributions through Winter Warmth, the Low-income Energy Assistance Program, and the Settlement Fund are provided through 100% corporate partner dollars.

OTHER DEPARTMENT CONSULTATIONS/CONCURRENCE:

NIL.

ATTACHMENTS


PREPARED BY:  Lynn Randall, Director, Social Planning, Policy and Program Administration
               Marie Morrison, Manager, Social Planning
               Jennifer Walker, Social Planning Associate

APPROVED BY:  Douglas Bartholomew-Saunders, Commissioner, Social Services
Appendix A

WATERLOO REGION ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

WREAP
2012 ANNUAL REPORT

Region of Waterloo
SOCIAL SERVICES

Regional Municipality of Waterloo
Social Planning, Policy and Program Administration
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1.0 INTRODUCTION
The purpose of this report is to review data from the 2012 Waterloo Region Energy Assistance Program (WREAP), highlight energy trends and policy changes impacting low-income households, and identify program plans for the next year. Since the 2002/2003 heating season, Waterloo Region has been working in partnership with government, not-for-profit, and for-profit organizations to respond to community need for emergency energy assistance. There are three main goals of the partnership model:

a) To prevent housing instability and housing loss due to an inability to pay energy costs.
b) To avoid duplication and coordinate services among energy assistance programs.
c) To fill gaps in energy assistance and respond to individual/family need when all other sources of assistance have been exhausted.

For 2012, the WREAP partnership included the following programs, with funding administered and delivered by Region Social Services to low-income households on behalf of the partnership:

I. Waterloo Region Social Services Energy Assistance:
   - For Ontario Works recipients: Assistance was provided through the Community Start Up and Maintenance Benefit (CSUMB) and Discretionary Benefits. Funding was cost-shared on an 82.8/17.2 basis between the Province and the Region. This assistance was available year-round.
   - For individuals not receiving Ontario Works: Assistance was provided to Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) recipients through Discretionary Benefits and to others in need through Emergency funds. Funding was cost-shared on an 82.8/17.2 basis between the Province and the Region. This assistance was available year-round.

II. Corporate Partner Fund:
   - Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LEAP): Funding is provided by local utility companies including: Cambridge and North Dumfries Hydro, Kitchener-Wilmot Hydro, Kitchener Utilities, and Waterloo North Hydro. The amount of funding is calculated annually at 0.12% of the companies’ revenues and is available from January 1st until funds are exhausted.
   - Lawsuit Settlement Fund: Funding is available through a class action lawsuit settlement administered through United Way of Greater Toronto. In Waterloo Region, the utilities involved are: Cambridge and North Dumfries Hydro, Kitchener-Wilmot Hydro, and Waterloo North Hydro. Funding is available as needed until all funds are exhausted.

III. Winter Warmth: Funding is provided by Union Gas in partnership with the United Way of Cambridge and North Dumfries and the United Way of Kitchener-Waterloo for low-income Union Gas customers. Funding through a lawsuit settlement involving Union Gas is also included in the Winter Warmth program and is available from January 1st until funds are exhausted.

IV. Provincial Emergency Energy Fund: Funding was provided 100% from the Province through the Ministry of Community and Social Services and was available from January 1st until funds were exhausted.
2.0 ENERGY TRENDS AND POLICY OVERVIEW
This section describes Ontario’s energy sector and the roles of organizations involved in providing electricity and natural gas across the Province. Pricing trends will be reviewed for both electricity and natural gas and any patterns will be described.

2.1 Energy Sector Overview
There are several players in the energy sector. Four entities have legislative influence, with the Government of Ontario, Ministry of Energy as the overarching governing body. The Ontario Energy Board (OEB), the Independent Electricity System Operator (IESO), and the Ontario Power Authority (OPA) all have legislative roles, including regulating prices and licensing, overseeing short-term supply, and coordinating long-term energy conservation, respectively. Ontario Power Generation and HydroOne are provincially owned. Ontario Power Generation is an electricity generation company that generates approximately 70% of Ontario’s power via hydroelectric, nuclear, and fossil fuel stations. HydroOne operates the majority of Ontario’s transmission lines and supplies power to most rural areas. Local distributors supply power to residents in urban settings. The diagram below illustrates and further describes the roles of the entities in Ontario’s electricity sector:

Figure 1: Ontario’s Electricity Structure*

*adapted from the Ontario Power Authority [http://www.powerauthority.on.ca/ontarios-energy-sector](http://www.powerauthority.on.ca/ontarios-energy-sector)

The natural gas sector operates on a somewhat smaller level. The OEB regulates natural gas prices for Union Gas, Enbridge Gas, and Natural Resource Gas (but not Kitchener Utilities and Utilities Kingston) and licenses gas marketers. Producers are firms that are involved in the exploration, processing, and production of natural gas and petroleum. There are a small number of pipeline and storage companies that are involved in pipeline transmission and gas storage. Local gas distributors deliver natural gas to consumers, but also have storage containers to reduce costs during the winter months.
2.2 Energy Prices and Trends
The following section describes trends in electricity and natural gas prices and some of the impacts for low income households.

**Electricity**
Over the past five years, electricity rates have consistently increased. Electricity prices are driven by weather, economic activity, and generation available. Other factors that have an affect on the increasing electricity price are the government’s movement towards greener, cleaner power generation and the introduction of the Harmonized Sales Tax (HST) in July 2010. However, the Liberal government began providing a 10% hydro rate cut beginning January 1, 2011 for the next five years. Taking all these factors into consideration, the net affect of hydro prices in the coming years is difficult to predict.

The following are electricity prices and trends for consumers who pay OEB-regulated prices.\(^1\)

**Tiered Prices:**
There are approximately 8% of residential and small businesses that were still paying tiered prices, but were expected to switch to Time-of-Use (TOU) pricing by the end of 2012. Effective November 1, 2012, tiered prices for electricity for below threshold are 7.4 cents per kilowatt hour (kWh; below or at 1000 kWh for winter and 600 kWh for summer) and 8.7 cents per kWh for above threshold.

There was an average increase in tiered electricity prices of 6% from 2011 to 2012. Over the past five years, (2008 to 2012) there has been an overall average increase of 48% for consumers on tiered pricing.

**Figure 2: Tiered electricity prices**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Below Threshold</th>
<th>Above Threshold</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Thresholds may vary from year to year.

\(^1\) These rates are set by the OEB. Rates for electricity purchased from a retailer are different, dependent on the contract.
Time of Use (TOU):
The OEB sets TOU pricing that is dependent on the time of day (On-Peak, Mid-Peak, and Off-Peak), day of the week (weekdays versus weekend), and by season (winter or summer). As mentioned, there are three periods of energy consumption based on the time of day. During the summer months, On-Peak is from 11:00 am to 5:00 pm, Mid-Peak is from 7:00 am to 11:00 am and from 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm, and Off-Peak is every weekday from 7:00 pm to 7:00 am the following day, weekends, and holidays. During the winter months, On-Peak and Mid-Peak are switched. Effective November 1, 2012, TOU prices are: 11.8 cents per kWh On-Peak, 9.9 cents per kWh Mid-Peak, and 6.3 cents per kWh Off-Peak.

There was an average increase in TOU electricity prices of 6% from 2011 to 2012. Over the past five years (2008 to 2012), there has been an overall average increase of 59% for consumers paying TOU pricing. TOU pricing can be particularly challenging for people with low income because they may be home during the day while electricity prices are higher as opposed to others who are working and not using as much energy.

Figure 3: Time-of-Use electricity prices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Off</th>
<th>Mid</th>
<th>On</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>9.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>11.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Natural Gas
Natural gas rates have decreased over the past five years, but the decreases are tempered by HST and inflation. Experts predict that natural gas prices will remain steady. Natural gas is publicly traded and any significant event that impacts either supply or demand, such as the discovery of new supplies or weather, can impact the trading price of natural gas on the North American market. Natural gas rates may change quarterly, making it difficult to budget.

The OEB sets the rates that Union Gas, Enbridge Gas Distribution, and Natural Resource Gas can charge for selling, distributing, transporting, and storing gas. Quarterly rate adjustments are made to reflect the difference between forecasted price for natural gas in the next 12 months and actual costs.

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[2] Diagrams of winter and summer On-Peak, Mid-Peak, and Off-Peak times can be found on the OEB website: [http://www.ontarioenergyboard.ca/OEB/Consumers/Electricity/Smart-Meters](http://www.ontarioenergyboard.ca/OEB/Consumers/Electricity/Smart-Meters)
The graph below shows natural gas rates for the past five years, using rates adjusted in the month of October, with the exception of Kitchener Utilities\(^3\).

**Figure 4: Natural gas prices**

![Natural gas prices graph]

There has been an average decrease of 7\% in natural gas prices from 2011 to 2012 and an overall average rate decrease of 62\% across the natural gas companies (summarized below) since 2008. The table below describes percentage decreases in the price of gas between 2008 and 2012.

**Table 1: Natural gas price trends**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Union Gas Limited</td>
<td>-45.60%</td>
<td>-36.39%</td>
<td>-14.67%</td>
<td>-3.49%</td>
<td>-71.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enbridge Gas Distribution Inc.</td>
<td>-47.63%</td>
<td>-20.66%</td>
<td>-31.28%</td>
<td>-3.68%</td>
<td>-72.49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Resource Gas Limited</td>
<td>-34.62%</td>
<td>-1.60%</td>
<td>-32.75%</td>
<td>-2.66%</td>
<td>-57.88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitchener Utilities</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>-20.89%</td>
<td>-15.20%</td>
<td>-17.45%</td>
<td>-44.62%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^3\) The OEB does not set rates for Kitchener Utilities. Kitchener Utilities’ rates shown are for the months of November 2008, May 2009, July 2010, April 2011, and July 2012.
2.3 Regulated versus Contract Prices
Since the *Ontario Energy Board Act, 1998*, the OEB has set and regularly reviewed natural gas and electricity prices, which may change several times over the course of a year based on short- and long-term market prices. By default, consumers pay the regulated prices set by the OEB. Consumers may opt out and sign a contract with an electricity retailer or gas marketer and pay the commodity price in their contract, which is usually fixed for a number of years. The OEB does not regulate the prices retailers and marketers offer.

Issues may arise when consumers sign a contract without fully understanding the conditions of the contract – particularly with respect to the price offered and exit conditions. The fixed price is only for the commodity portion, which is about 50% of the total cost. All other charges for delivery, regulatory charges, and debt retirement are in addition to the rate specified in the contract. Typically, consumers who sign a contract will experience an increase in their electricity and/or gas bill, at least in the short term.

On January 1, 2011, the *Energy Consumer Protection Act, 2010* (ECPA) came into affect to ensure electricity retailers and gas marketers were following fair business procedures and to better protect consumers through licensing procedures. Retailers and marketers have been licensed by the OEB since May 2002, but problems still arose for consumers when door-to-door sales representatives offered lower energy rates with hidden additional costs. With the implementation of the ECPA, the OEB strictly monitors adherence to the guidelines to prevent customer vulnerability to expensive bills and cancelling fees. Consumers also did not have the option of seeking assistance from a regulatory board if they were in a contract with a retailer or marketer, again creating financially vulnerable situations. Although the OEB does not regulate retailers’ and marketers’ prices, they do have to follow specific procedures in order to conduct business with Ontario energy consumers. Any retailer or marketer who is not licensed with the OEB cannot enter into, renew, extend, or amend contracts with consumers.

The OEB updated and implemented their Codes of Conduct for retailers and marketers to align with the ECPA. As part of the code, retailers and marketers are required to provide consumers with a disclosure statement and price comparison guide so consumers can make informed choices before entering into a contract. The disclosure statement contains information about charges consumers are still expected to pay and timeframes for cancelling contracts without penalty should they change their mind. Retailers and marketers are also required to follow specific scripts to verify new contracts and renew or extend existing contracts, which allows another opportunity for consumers to cancel their contract.

2.4 Smart Meters
The Ministry of Energy has legislated that by 2010, every home and small business in Ontario will have a Smart Meter. Smart Meters record total electricity consumption hour by hour and send that information to utility companies through either a wireless or other form of technology so that electricity rates can be based on TOU (as explained on page 11). As of September 30, 2012, 92% of residential and small business customers in Ontario were on TOU billing. There is still a small number of hydro companies throughout Ontario that have not transitioned to TOU pricing from tiered. All local hydro companies in the Region have transitioned to TOU pricing.

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For more information and tips from the OEB on electricity retailer or gas marketer contracts, visit their website: [http://www.ontarioenergyboard.ca/OEB/Consumers/Energy+Contracts](http://www.ontarioenergyboard.ca/OEB/Consumers/Energy+Contracts)
3.0 ASSISTANCE FOR LOW-INCOME ENERGY CONSUMERS

The following section further describes programs in the WREAP partnership and provides an overview of the changes to be implemented in 2013. In addition, the saveONenergy Home Assistance program is described.

3.1 Waterloo Region Social Services Energy Assistance

In 2012, low-income energy consumers on Ontario Works (OW) were able to first access the Community Start Up and Maintenance Benefit (CSUMB)\(^5\) and Discretionary Benefits through the Region’s OW office before LEAP funds and other emergency sources. Low-income consumers on the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) accessed CSUMB through the ODSP office and accessed Discretionary Benefits through the Region’s OW office.

In July 2012, Discretionary Benefits\(^6\) were capped and on January 1, 2013, CSUMB was eliminated as a mandatory benefit by the Province. This has reduced the amount of funding for emergency energy assistance and changed the way funds are administered through WREAP. As a result, it is planned for 2013 that other energy funding sources will be accessed first with Discretionary Benefits used only as a last resort for OW and ODSP recipients. At this point, it is not clear how the changes in social assistance funding will affect the WREAP program, such as the length of availability of LEAP funds throughout the year.

3.2 Low-income Energy Assistance Program (LEAP)

LEAP was implemented in January 2011. There are three components of LEAP: emergency financial assistance for customers in need; access to more flexible customer service rules on matters such as bill payment and disconnection notice periods; and targeted conservation and demand management programs. In November 2011, rules for low-income consumers regarding energy arrears came into effect and were implemented in 2012 by the OEB and utility companies in the Region. Examples of customer service rules for eligible low-income consumers include:

- The ability to request a waiver for security deposits.
- Suspending disconnection for 21 days after the distributor has received notice from a social service agency that a consumer is eligible to receive bill payment assistance.
- Requesting equal monthly billing payments, similar to other customers.
- Extending time periods to make payments when low-income consumers enter into arrears agreements with the utility in comparison to other consumers. Time periods increase as the amount of arrears owed increases.
- Preventing distributors from charging late payment fees after a low-income consumer has entered into an arrears agreement with the utility.

For the LEAP Emergency Financial Assistance component, utility companies are required to allocate 0.12% of their revenues to assist low income utility customers with energy arrears. As such, the amount of funding varies from year to year. This component of LEAP is being delivered locally under the umbrella of WREAP. The four local hydro companies participating in LEAP include: Cambridge and North Dumfries Hydro, Kitchener Utilities\(^7\), Kitchener-Wilmot Hydro, and Waterloo North Hydro. No changes to LEAP were made in 2012, with the exception of an updated manual.

\(^5\) For more information on the CSUMB, see the Community Services Committee Report SS-12-049, dated November 6, 2012.

\(^6\) Through OW and ODSP

\(^7\) Kitchener Utilities is not mandated at this time to participate in LEAP; however, they have chosen to participate.
3.3 Settlement Fund
The Settlement Fund was implemented to assist low-income households across Ontario as a result of court settlements in 2011 involving utility companies charging late payment penalties of 5 to 7 percent per month up until the early 2000s. However, the Criminal Code prohibits charging interest of more than 60 percent per year. While the settlements are similar in nature, it is important to note that the settlement for Union Gas and Enbridge Gas is separate and different from the settlement for the hydro companies.

Hydro settlement fund
Locally, the Settlement Fund is used to supplement the Provincial Emergency Energy Fund (see 3.4), allowing greater flexibility for assisting households who may not meet LEAP criteria. Although the Settlement Fund has greater flexibility than LEAP, the funds may not be used for utilities outside those involved in the Settlement, which include: Cambridge and North Dumfries Hydro, Kitchener-Wilmot Hydro, and Waterloo North Hydro. The Settlement Fund is managed through the United Way of Greater Toronto and payments to the Region are made in annual installments as required until funds are depleted. No changes to the program were made in 2012, with the exception of an updated manual.

Union Gas and Enbridge Gas settlement fund
The Settlement Fund from this lawsuit is managed through the Winter Warmth program and is separate from LEAP. Winter Warmth is delivered for Union Gas only and through the United Way of Cambridge and North Dumfries and the United Way of Kitchener-Waterloo to the Region for WREAP. It is anticipated that the Winter Warmth program will continue until these funds are fully expended, at which point Winter Warmth will move to become LEAP. No changes to the program were made in 2012.

3.4 Provincial Emergency Energy Fund (PEEF)
PEEF was a 100% provincially funded initiative to assist low-income energy consumers with arrears since 2002. Locally, the fund was used as “top-up” for those consumers who exceeded the limit on LEAP and settlement funds, and for energy sources not covered under other programs (e.g. oil, wood, etc.). As of January 1, 2013, the PEEF is no longer available as it was consolidated with other programs for homelessness prevention as described in the next paragraph.

The Provincial Government implemented the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI) on January 1, 2013. CHPI consolidated the following five existing homelessness prevention programs, four of which were under the Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS), but are now under the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH):
- Consolidated Homelessness Prevention Program (100% MCSS)
- Provincial Rent Bank Program (100% MMAH)
- Emergency Energy Fund (100% MCSS)
- Emergency Hostel Services (82.8/17.2 cost-shared MCSS and the Region)
- Domiciliary Hostel Program (80/20 cost-shared MCSS and the Region)

In the fall of 2012, the Region planned for implementing the new CHPI program and considered how cuts in provincial funding would affect the WREAP. With the elimination of PEEF and CSUMB, and the capping of Discretionary Benefits, there was a significant gap in WREAP, and training for staff is needed to understand how funds will now be distributed. Regional Council approved some on-going and one-time funding for Discretionary Benefits that may be used to support WREAP. On December 27, 2012, MCSS announced $42 million in one-time funding to support municipalities across Ontario in transitioning to the new CHPI. The Region’s allocation was identified as $1,517,140 for January 1, 2013 to March 31, 2014 to be used for CHPI housing and homelessness related supports based on local priorities. Part of this funding will be used for the WREAP.
3.5 saveONenergy Home Assistance Program

The saveONenergy program was implemented in 2011 and is funded by the Ontario Power Authority (OPA) and offered via local utility companies to encourage all homeowners and businesses to use more energy efficient products. The program offers coupons and incentives for homeowners and businesses to upgrade inefficient energy products and appliances. Coupons are offered to upgrade to more efficient light bulbs, light fixtures, lighting power control products, weatherstripping, hot water pipe wrap, hot water heater blankets, advanced power bars, outdoor timers, clotheslines, and programmable thermostats. Incentives are available for replacing existing inefficient appliances and heating and cooling systems, such as free fridge and freezer pick-up and recycling, and money back for installing efficient central heating and air conditioning units. The program is expected to be offered until 2014, when a new program will developed as a replacement.

The OPA implemented the saveONenergy Home Assistance program to assist low-income homeowners and tenants with upgrades to make their homes more energy efficient. The program is funded by the OPA, administered by local utility companies, and managed by GreenSaver, a non-profit organization in Toronto. Local utilities involved in the Home Assistance program include: Cambridge and North Dumfries Hydro, Kitchener-Wilmot Hydro, and Waterloo North Hydro, with partnership support from Kitchener Utilities. One of the ways in which households become eligible for the program is if they have received LEAP funding at any point within a 12 month period.

The program provides eligible low-income households with a free detailed in-home energy assessment, installation of energy-efficient upgrades (e.g., energy-saving light bulbs, power bar, low-flow shower head, faucet aerators, programmable thermostat, and/or weatherstripping around doors and windows), and advice about changes to save energy and how to use new energy-saving upgrades correctly. Owners or tenants of residential buildings (such as a detached or semi-detached house, a townhouse, a mobile home or a unit in a duplex, triplex or other multi-residential building) can apply for the Home Assistance Program by contacting GreenSaver.
4.0 SUMMARY OF WREAP FUNDING DISTRIBUTION

WREAP funding has evolved through the years to include various funding sources with different eligibility criteria. Prior to LEAP, corporate partners contributed to the WREAP Heat Bank, which had flexible eligibility guidelines allowing funds to be pooled together so that assistance was provided across Waterloo Region according to need. While the amount of funds has increased, the flexibility in eligibility criteria has decreased, creating challenges in the coordination, distribution, and reporting of the additional funds. With LEAP and Winter Warmth, funds must be distributed separately for each utility. This means LEAP and Winter Warmth funds may not be used to assist with arrears from a different utility. As such, eligibility for LEAP and Winter Warmth in 2012 was first assessed in order to maximize PEEF funds to be used in situations where:

- Energy arrears exceed the $500 LEAP/Winter Warmth maximum and a “top-up” is required.
- Household income is above the LICO + 15% cut-off but a real and immediate need still exists.
- The household has an energy arrear with a utility outside of LEAP or Union Gas companies.
- A particular utility’s LEAP or Winter Warmth allocation has been depleted.

PEEF funds were available all year until December 31, 2012, and were fully exhausted. The CHPI one-time transition funds will assist with the elimination of PEEF for 2013.

The following tables provide a summary of WREAP funding distribution across the different energy sources. Data from Waterloo Region Social Services Energy Assistance (i.e. Discretionary Benefits and CSUMB for OW and ODSP recipients) is not accessible in the format required for this report through the current database technology. Note that this is the largest source of energy assistance.

4.1 Total Dollars Distributed from 2002/03 to 2012

For 2012, $207,739 in energy assistance was distributed. Prior to 2011, Corporate Partners voluntarily contributed funds to WREAP. Beginning in 2011, Corporate Partners were mandated to provide 0.12% of revenues to a low-income energy assistance program. The PEEF remained at the same level. The table below shows the overall trends in levels of funding from 2002/03 to 2012.

Table 2: Dollars distributed by funding source

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corporate Partner Funds*</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>34,000</td>
<td>36,500</td>
<td>41,000</td>
<td>44,000</td>
<td>46,000</td>
<td>134,275</td>
<td>113,828</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provincial Emergency Energy Fund*</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>62,672</td>
<td>151,602</td>
<td>77,071</td>
<td>62,689</td>
<td>62,689</td>
<td>67,689</td>
<td>67,689</td>
<td>67,689</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share the Warmth^</td>
<td>21,062</td>
<td>9,859</td>
<td>14,826</td>
<td>11,121</td>
<td>8,837</td>
<td>6,100</td>
<td>4,500</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winter Warmth</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>12,500</td>
<td>14,800</td>
<td>13,038</td>
<td>19,152</td>
<td>21,563</td>
<td>41,645</td>
<td>26,222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total $’s</td>
<td>31,062</td>
<td>29,859</td>
<td>97,498</td>
<td>209,223</td>
<td>137,208</td>
<td>122,827</td>
<td>130,341</td>
<td>135,252</td>
<td>243,609</td>
<td>207,739</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*From 2002-2010 it was the Heat Bank Corporation Fund. In 2011, LEAP and Hydro Settlement Funds were combined for each utility.

+ 2012 was the last year PEEF would be available as a funding source.

^From 2005 to 2009, Share the Warmth received $5000 (10% for administration) per year funding from the Region through the Provincial Emergency Energy Fund. Share the Warmth ceased operations after the 2009 heating season.
There are a few factors that potentially influenced the amount of funding distributed in 2012. As mentioned, it was announced that CSUMB would be eliminated and Discretionary Benefits would be capped for people who use OW and ODSP. It is possible that these two benefits were maximized in 2012 prior to accessing LEAP funds for social assistance recipients. In addition, low-income customer service guidelines were implemented for utility companies in November 2011. Perhaps utility companies were diligently applying these guidelines (e.g. extended time periods for late payments) for low-income consumers, making arrears more manageable and less likely they would access WREAP funds. It is difficult to track and access data for these two identified scenarios, and therefore statements are speculative at best.

4.2 Distribution by Funding Source 2012

The WREAP reflects a mix of financing arrangements as identified below and described earlier in the introduction. The table below shows dollars distributed by source of funding and utility.

Table 3: Dollars distributed by funding source and utility company

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Corporate Partner Fund</th>
<th>LEAP</th>
<th>Settlement Fund</th>
<th>PEEF</th>
<th>Winter Warmth</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cambridge &amp; North Dumfries Hydro</td>
<td>25,231</td>
<td>4,232</td>
<td>2,905</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>32,368</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitchener Utilities</td>
<td>14,490</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>29,160</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>43,650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitchener-Wilmot Hydro</td>
<td>40,460</td>
<td>13,529</td>
<td>8,171</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>62,160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union Gas</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8,122</td>
<td>26,222</td>
<td>34,344</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waterloo North Hydro</td>
<td>15,886</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2,459</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>18,345</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>17,117</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>16,872</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>$96,067</strong></td>
<td><strong>$17,761</strong></td>
<td><strong>$67,689</strong></td>
<td><strong>$26,222</strong></td>
<td><strong>$207,739</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The figure below describes the percentage of dollars distributed by each type of funding source.

**Figure 5: Percentage of dollars distributed by funding source**

The following section describes how and where funds were distributed throughout the Waterloo Region based on funding source and utility company.

**Corporate Partner Fund**
The Corporate Partner Fund includes funding from the LEAP and Settlement Funds. Corporate Partner funds accounted for 55% of WREAP funds to support residents with energy assistance in 2012.

**LEAP**
LEAP funding amounts change annually depending on each utility’s revenues, with a maximum of 15% available for administration. Any funds that are not distributed may be carried forward into the next year. For 2012, the total LEAP funding distributed was $96,067. Approximately $21,000 was carried forward for Waterloo North Hydro and $13,000 was carried forward for Kitchener Utilities customers for 2013.

**Lawsuit Settlement**
The total amount of Settlement Funds available is $372,997, with a maximum of 15% available for administration. Funds are provided in annual installments and as requested until they are exhausted. No additional funds were requested by the Region in 2012 because initial funds were received late in 2011 and approximately $54,000 was available, of which, $17,761 was distributed in 2012. The following amounts for each utility were carried forward to 2013: Cambridge and North Dumfries Hydro, $17,000; Kitchener-Wilmot Hydro, $2,600; and Waterloo North Hydro, $16,800.

**Provincial Emergency Energy Fund**
The Provincial Emergency Energy Fund (PEEF) accounted for 32% of WREAP funds to support residents with energy assistance in 2012. Provincial one-time funding began in 2004/2005 and

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8 As PEEF funds were accessed first, less LEAP funds were used for Kitchener Utilities in 2012, which does not reflect the demand for the LEAP program for this utility.
ended on December 31, 2012. This funding was annualized at $75,210 in 2007 and remained at the same level\(^9\). Ten percent ($7,521) was available for administrative costs, leaving $67,689 total provincial dollars available for assistance.

PEEF funds were available all year and were fully exhausted as of December 31, 2012. In planning for the implementation of the Provincial Homelessness Consolidation Phase I\(^10\), it is important to consider that funding with greater flexibility to meet local needs (such as PEEF) is in demand. With the elimination of PEEF for 2013, funding through the CHPI one-time grant will be available for 2013/2014.

**Winter Warmth**

Winter Warmth funds accounted for 13% of WREAP funds to support residents with energy assistance in 2012. Winter Warmth began operating in 2006. The allocation for Winter Warmth funds has hovered around $13,000 until 2009, when additional funding was provided as a result of settlement funds discussed above. In 2012, $27,855 was available\(^11\) for assistance. Winter Warmth funds were almost fully expended, with $1,633 carried forward to 2013.

**4.3 Distribution by Energy Source 2012**

In 2012, 16% of funding was directed to Union Gas, 16% to Cambridge and North Dumfries Hydro, 21% to Kitchener Utilities, 30% to Kitchener-Wilmot Hydro, 9% to Waterloo North Hydro, and 8% to other energy sources.

![Figure 6: Percentage of dollars distributed by utility company](image)

Some households were helped with more than one energy payment through various energy assistance programs. Numbers are rounded to the nearest dollar figure.

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\(^9\) There was an additional one-time allotment in 2007, however, it was not provided in the years following.  
\(^10\) The consolidation includes the following five homelessness prevention programs: Consolidated Homelessness Prevention Program, Provincial Rent Bank Program, Emergency Energy Fund, Emergency Shelter Program, and the Domiciliary Hostel Program.  
\(^11\) Includes $855 carried over from 2011.
5.0 SUMMARY OF HOUSEHOLDS ASSISTED

This section summarizes data of households assisted with energy arrears through WREAP in 2012\textsuperscript{12}. The differences from 2011 were that an additional 47 households received assistance, the average arrears and assistance amounts decreased for two of the hydro companies most consumed by households, but more households were assisted for both utilities.

Similar to previous years, households with children and sources of income other than OW or ODSP represent the largest proportion of all households assisted (as they would first be assisted through Social Services Energy Assistance). The number of singles and couples who required assistance increased this year from 2011. These findings are further discussed below.

5.1 Households Assisted from 2002/03 to 2012

In 2012, a total of 562 households were provided with assistance through the WREAP. This is a 10% increase from 2011.

Table 4: Total number of households assisted

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corporate Partner Fund</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>412</td>
<td>490</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provincial Emergency Energy Fund</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>321</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share the Warmth</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>56+</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winter Warmth</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>462</td>
<td>264</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>259</td>
<td>283</td>
<td>515</td>
<td>562</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.2 Assistance from 2002/03 to 2012

Across all funding sources, an average of $401 was provided per household. This is similar to 2011 where $402 was provided per household. The table below shows the average amount of assistance provided to households from 2002/03 to 2012.

Table 5: Average energy arrears assistance provided

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corporate Partner Fund</td>
<td>313</td>
<td>370</td>
<td>403</td>
<td>466</td>
<td>487</td>
<td>538</td>
<td>536</td>
<td>496</td>
<td>406</td>
<td>384</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provincial Emergency Energy Fund</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>485</td>
<td>472</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share the Warmth</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>267</td>
<td>293</td>
<td>315</td>
<td>339</td>
<td>346</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winter Warmth</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>417</td>
<td>423</td>
<td>395</td>
<td>407</td>
<td>399</td>
<td>397</td>
<td>484</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>$252</td>
<td>$277</td>
<td>$385</td>
<td>$412</td>
<td>$408</td>
<td>$424</td>
<td>$430</td>
<td>$448</td>
<td>$402</td>
<td>$401</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{12} Data from Waterloo Region Social Services Energy Assistance (i.e. Discretionary Benefits and CSUMB for OW and ODSP recipients) is not included as it was not accessible in the format required for this report through the current database technology. Note that this is the largest source of energy assistance.
5.3 Household Type 2012

As with previous years, families with children represented the greatest proportion of energy assistance recipients in 2012, totaling 63% of all households served. There was a 2% decrease in the percentage of families assisted compared with 2011. Couples and singles without children represented 37% of households assisted. There was a 36% increase in the number of couples and singles assisted compared with 2011. The table below provides a summary of the types of households assisted in 2012 by energy source.

Table 6: Percentage of types of households served by utility company

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Utility Company</th>
<th>Single</th>
<th>Couple</th>
<th>One-parent</th>
<th>Two-parent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cambridge &amp; North Dumfries Hydro</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitchener Utilities</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitchener-Wilmot Hydro</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union Gas</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waterloo North Hydro</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Numbers are rounded to the nearest percentage

5.4 Source of Income 2012

Of all households that accessed the WREAP, most are employed or receive other sources of income (67%). This is because those on OW or ODSP can typically access energy assistance directly from those programs via their caseworker, which was not able to be captured in the data.

Table 7: Percentage of source of income by utility company

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Utility Company</th>
<th>OW</th>
<th>ODSP</th>
<th>Employed/Other*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cambridge &amp; North Dumfries Hydro</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitchener Utilities</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitchener-Wilmot Hydro</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union Gas</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waterloo North Hydro</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*May include one or a combination of income sources from employment, pensions, child support, Employment Insurance etc. Note that the totals in the OW and ODSP columns are not exact due to rounding.

5.5 Location of Households 2012

The location of households receiving energy assistance is fairly representative of the Region’s geographical population distribution. Fifty-three percent of households assisted resided in Kitchener, 30% in Cambridge, 12% in Waterloo, and 5% in the Townships. In comparison, the Region’s population distribution was 42%, 24%, 23%, and 11%, respectively.\(^{13}\)

Table 8: Percentage of household location by utility company

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Utility Company</th>
<th>Kitchener</th>
<th>Waterloo</th>
<th>Cambridge</th>
<th>Townships</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cambridge &amp; North Dumfries Hydro</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitchener Utilities</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitchener-Wilmot Hydro</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union Gas</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waterloo North Hydro</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>53%</strong></td>
<td><strong>12%</strong></td>
<td><strong>30%</strong></td>
<td><strong>5%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Total is not exact due to rounding.

### 6.0 CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

An inability to pay utility bills is one of four indicators\(^{14}\) of households at-risk of housing instability. The WREAP has operated successfully in a partnership model over the past ten years offering energy assistance to prevent housing instability and housing loss in Waterloo Region. The following are highlights from the 2012 heating season:

- A total of 562 households in the Region received assistance through WREAP.
- $207,739 total dollars were distributed to low-income consumers.
- The average assistance received was $401, similar to 2011.
- 63% of households assisted were families with children, a 2% decrease from 2011.
- 37% of households assisted were singles and couples, a 36% increase from 2011.
- 53% of households were located in Kitchener, 30% in Cambridge, 12% in Waterloo, and 5% in the Townships.

### Next Steps

Each year, measures are taken to facilitate effective coordination and promotion of the WREAP. In 2012, these activities included:

- Updating energy assistance flyers and distributing 11,000 across the Region. The flyer is also posted to the Region’s website.
- Updating the Region’s webpage regarding the WREAP.
- Monthly activity reports were distributed to the United Way of Cambridge and North Dumfries and the United Way of Kitchener-Wilmot Hydro and Cambridge-United Way of Kitchener-Wilmot regarding the Winter Warmth program.
- Progress and annual reports were completed and submitted for LEAP and Settlement Funds.
- Utility companies continued to promote the program to their customers through the internet, flyers (e.g., at service counters, with customer care representatives) and staff members (e.g., over the phone, in person at the service counter).

Several significant trends, program and policy changes were noted in this report. To keep apprised of the recent changes and to ensure continued effectiveness of the WREAP in assisting low-income households with energy arrears, the following next steps are planned to be completed by Region staff for 2013:

- Meet with Utility Partners in early 2013 to discuss WREAP 2012 findings and plans for 2013.
- Continue to promote the saveONenergy program.
- Monitor funding levels and assess how recent funding changes affect the WREAP program.
- Continue to prepare WREAP annual reports and bring to Council for information.

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\(^{14}\) Other indicators are: household dedicating more than 30% of their income to shelter, family falls into the low-income category as defined by Statistics Canada, and use of food banks. Source: Assessing Economic-based Homelessness: A Report for the Housing Stability System. Website: [www.regionofwaterloo.ca](http://www.regionofwaterloo.ca).
MEMORANDUM

TO: Medical Officers of Health
Chief Executive Officers
Board of Health Chairs

RE: Public Health Funding Review Update

DATE: February 11, 2013

I am writing to update you on the process related to the Public Health Funding Review, which is identifying and examining proposed elements that should be considered in the development of a funding formula for mandatory programs and unorganized territories.

As you may recall, the Funding Review Working Group (FRWG) was originally established in April 2010 and met regularly until June, 2011. Meetings of the FRWG resumed again in October 2012, and include representatives from 10 health units, Association of Local Public Health Agencies (alPHa), and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO). The FRWG was formed by the ministry to provide its best advice on possible funding models, considering equity factors, potential risks, and implementation issues.

When the FRWG was established, its Terms of Reference recognized that no new funding would be available to implement any new, proposed funding model, and that any funding adjustments would be implemented on an incremental basis, using any future increases to the overall provincial funding envelope for public health. When the FRWG was reconvened in October 2012, it discussed the current fiscal environment and how this might impact its work.

Field input sessions were led by FRWG members on January 14th with Medical Officers of Health and Chief Executive Officers, and again on January 16th with Business Administrators, with the purpose of seeking input on the proposed elements of a potential funding model.

Once the FRWG has reviewed the feedback from the field, it will finalize its report and submit it to the ministry for consideration.
The ministry recognizes the importance of engaging key stakeholders on any considerations related to a potential funding model for public health including, aPHa Board of Directors, the Public Health Leadership Council, Boards of Health, AMO and the City of Toronto.

I will continue to provide updates to you as the process continues.

Thank you,

[Arlene King signature]

Arlene King, MD, MHSc, FRCPC
Chief Medical Officer of Health

c: Kate Manson-Smith, Assistant Deputy Minister, Health Promotion Division
   Roselle Martino, Executive Director, Public Health Division
   Sylvia Shedden, Director, Public Health Standards, Practice and Accountability Branch, Public Health Division
MEMORANDUM

To: Chair Sean Strickland and Members of the Community Services Committee

From: Don Beitz, Manager, Income Support Services
      David Dirks, Director, Employment and Income Support

Copies: Douglas Bartholomew-Saunders, Commissioner, Social Services

File No.: D29-30

Subject: FIRST RESPONSE PROTOCOL 2012 UPDATE

As a component of the Social Services Emergency Response Plan, the First Response Protocol assists with the immediate needs of food, shelter and clothing in the event of an emergency (eg. fire, unsafe premises) involving fewer than 50 individuals. The Protocol was introduced in 2002. This is an annual update reporting the Region’s response to such incidents in the year 2012.

Background

In partnership with the Canadian Red Cross, Lutherwood Housing Services and the John Howard Society Housing Help Centre, Social Services staff assists individuals who have been displaced from their residence due to an emergency (eg. fire, unsafe premises, gas leak). The Red Cross initially attends the site of the emergency to assess the needs of the individuals and to arrange for temporary accommodation, food and clothing as appropriate. The Red Cross is alerted of the emergency through Fire or Police Dispatch. Should it become evident that the emergency will displace more than 50 individuals, the Social Services Emergency Response Plan may be enacted at the discretion of the Commissioner of Social Services or his designate.

At the emergency site the Red Cross assesses the needs of the individuals and arranges temporary lodging in local motels. In large incidents and as necessary the GRT is called upon to provide a bus for shelter or transportation. In addition, the Red Cross provides each individual with a personal Comfort Kit (toothbrush, toothpaste, socks and underwear) as well as certificates for food. Depending upon the time and day of the event, the Red Cross contacts Employment & Income Support, Social Services during regular business hours or the After Hours On Call Service to advise that individuals have been placed in temporary accommodation. The cost of the temporary lodging and food is cost-shared with the Province (82.8% Province/17.2% Region in 2012.) contingent upon the financial eligibility of the individuals affected.
On the next business day, staff of Employment and Income Support meets with the individuals to assess them for emergency or ongoing financial assistance. The Red Cross also initiates contact with a Housing Help Centre (Lutherwood in Kitchener, John Howard Society in Cambridge) for assistance in obtaining alternate permanent accommodation for those who will not be able to return to their previous residence.

2012 Experience

The First Response Protocol was activated for 53 housing units in 2012. These events consisted of 19 fires and 1 eviction event, due to a condemned building, affecting 10 units. In total 73 adults and 26 children were assisted. There were almost the same number of impacted units when compared to the previous year in which there were 55 units assisted due to fire and 1 evacuation as a result of a police crime scene investigation. Of the impacted housing units in 2012, there were 33 in Kitchener-Waterloo and 20 in Cambridge. Individuals and families were accommodated in motels for a total of 141 days, which is a decrease of 115 days from the 256 emergency housing days in 2011. The source of income for the individuals affected was a mix of Ontario Works (OW), Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) and low income through other sources (not in receipt of OW or ODSP).

As appropriate, individuals also received financial assistance to secure alternate permanent accommodation, temporary storage of possessions, household goods (eg. furniture) and personal items. Individuals assisted through the First Response Protocol remained in a motel for an average of 3 days prior to arranging interim accommodation with family, friends, returning to their previous residence or acquiring a new residence.

Emotional Support

To address the immediate emotional and psychological needs of persons affected by an emergency the Region has developed the Waterloo Region Emergency Support Team (WREST). The WREST volunteers, trained in crisis intervention, are available to provide emotional support to persons traumatized by an emergency. WREST was activated on sixteen occasions in 2012 under the First Response Protocol, volunteering approximately 50 hours in total to provide support to those who were displaced from their homes. This number is a significant increase from the previous year in which WREST was activated on two occasions. The increase can be attributed to a new protocol whereby WREST team members follow-up with displaced persons within 24 hours to check on their emotional well-being, and offer additional support as needed. This protocol has been received and will continue for 2013.

WREST team leaders and managers also donated a total of approximately 83 hours during 2012 for meetings and an additional 360 hours in administrative duties. One new member joined WREST in 2012 and four members retired, bringing the total number of WREST volunteers to 30. WREST members also had the opportunity to participate in 3 training and networking opportunities, logging over 447 volunteer hours in total.

The success of the First Response is due in great part to the active role played by our community partners such as the Canadian Red Cross, Victim Services, Lutherwood, the John Howard Society, Police, Fire and the member agencies and volunteers of the WREST.

The First Response Protocol supports Focus Area Four of the Region’s 2011-2014 Strategic Focus: Healthy and Inclusive Communities.
For further information please contact Don Beitz, Manager, Income Support Services at 519-740-5742 or dbitz@regionofwaterloo.ca or David Dirks, Director, Employment & Income Support at 519-883-2179 or ddirks@regionofwaterloo.ca
January 23, 2013

Dear Early Years Partners,

I am pleased to announce that the government is taking another big step forward in the process of building a cohesive and coordinated system of early years and family supports in the province.

Since 2003, we have made significant progress in the early years and family supports system including implementing full-day kindergarten, taking steps to modernize child care, introducing Parenting and Family Literacy Centres in schools, enhancing early intervention and identification services, and supporting the delivery of a range of other child development and family support programs. Our commitment to Ontario’s children and families is stronger than ever; together, we now have an opportunity to build on the progress made to date and drive continued transformation of the early years and family supports system.

To maximize benefits for children, parents, our school, community, and municipal partners and the province as a whole, it’s time to move forward with a comprehensive plan of action. To this end, the Ontario government is releasing the Ontario Early Years Policy Framework which sets out the vision, guiding principles, and key areas for action for the early years and family supports system for children age 0-6 years and their parents / caregivers.

The framework responds to feedback we heard from our partners and Ontarians during discussions related to child care modernization and the concept of Best Start Child and Family Centres. We heard that families want better service experiences, easily obtainable information, and the right supports at the right times. The Ontario Early Years Policy Framework provides the necessary strategic direction to our partners both within and outside of government to achieve what families and service providers have asked for. The framework is attached for your reference.

One of the key areas for action within the framework is to create an effective approach to implementing Best Start Child and Family Centres, which builds on the advice of Dr. Charles Pascal and the remarkable work already underway in communities across the province. This will involve establishing a common mandate and identity by integrating family support programs in Ontario Early Years Centres, Parenting and Family Literacy Centres, Child Care / Family Resource Centres, and Better Beginnings, Better Futures sites while maintaining current investment levels. By integrating these existing family support programs, we will improve outcomes and provide better service experiences for children and their families. We will continue to work with our partners to implement this approach to Best Start Child and Family Centres by September 2014 when full-day kindergarten will be available to all of Ontario’s four- and five-year-olds in publicly-funded schools.

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In order to establish a common governance structure for family resource/support programs, child care, and full-day kindergarten, responsibility for Best Start Child and Family Centres will reside with the Ministry of Education. In addition, responsibilities related to the province’s support of Data Analysis Coordinators (DACs) and the Early Development Instrument (EDI) will be transferred to the Ministry of Education from the Ministry of Children and Youth Services. While the provincial funding support for Best Start Networks is also being transferred to the Ministry of Education, the Networks will continue to be expected to have broad early years representation reflecting their local communities.

The approach to Best Start Child and Family Centres will provide families and caregivers with easily accessible and responsive programs, services, and resources in convenient, recognizable locations, and will be supported by a user-friendly provincial website. Teams of qualified staff that include at least one registered early childhood educator will provide high-quality play and inquiry-based learning opportunities for children that are guided by the Early Learning Framework (http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/elf). Best Start Child and Family Centres will also provide access to information and timely referrals to help families access specialized services as needed.

As we move forward, we will capitalize and build on existing successful practices, collaborative efforts, and community networks and leverage the extensive knowledge and expertise of dedicated early years professionals and volunteers working in these programs.

Next Steps

It will take time to realize our collective vision for children and their families and we want to make sure we get it right. Over the coming months, we will work closely with our federal, provincial, municipal, First Nation, school board, and local community partners to ensure children and families continue to have access to services and to help inform next steps.

As a key part of the Ontario Early Years Policy Framework, we will continue to implement full-day kindergarten for all four- and five-year old children by 2014. The modernization of child care in the province remains a priority; we will continue to stabilize and transform the child care system. Additionally, the ministries of Health and Long-Term Care, Education, and Children and Youth Services are continuing to examine ways to improve the delivery of speech and language services for children across the province.

As Minister for both Education and Children and Youth Services, I am fortunate to work closely with school and community-based partners. I want to take this opportunity to thank each and every one of you for providing children and their families with quality care, education, and services each day in communities across the province.
We will continue to provide you with information in a timely manner as we move forward to achieve an improved Ontario early years and family supports system. We look forward to continuing to work with you to build a stronger, coordinated, and accessible system which will contribute to better outcomes for our children and a better future for Ontarians.

Yours truly,

Laurel Broten
Minister

Attachments:

- *Ontario Early Years Policy Framework-2013*

Resources:


Ontario Early Years Policy Framework
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Introduction

Our Vision for the Early Years
Ontario’s children and families are well supported by a system of responsive, high-quality, accessible, and increasingly integrated early years programs and services that contribute to healthy child development today and a stronger future tomorrow.

Ontario is emerging as a leader in the delivery of early years programs and services. With the province-wide introduction of full-day kindergarten, Ontario is at the forefront of a global transformation in early learning. Efforts to modernize child care and to create Best Start Child and Family Centres are also transforming the way programs and services are delivered, leading to better outcomes for children and a more seamless experience for families.

Ontario’s current early years services are robust and responsive. Every day, thousands of children and their families receive quality care and support from early years professionals in diverse communities across the province. While there is still fragmentation among and between services and service gaps, we are moving in the right direction. Now is the time to build on the positive steps we have taken over the last ten years to ensure we are harnessing the full capacity available to provide the best services and respond to the busy lives of Ontario families.
The Ontario Early Years Policy Framework builds on our collective progress and provides a vision for the early years to ensure children, from birth to age six, have the best possible start in life. The framework is supported by a set of principles and is meant to provide strategic direction to our early years partners both within and outside of government. Moving forward, the Ontario Early Years Policy Framework will guide our collective approach to the development and delivery of early years programs and services for children and families.

This framework also identifies priority areas for action. Our immediate focus will be to:

- continue with the implementation of full-day kindergarten by September 2014;
- create an effective approach to implementing Best Start Child and Family Centres by September 2014;
- improve the delivery of speech and language services;
- stabilize and transform the child care sector.

A common framework and approach will have far-reaching benefits for children, parents, families and caregivers, and early years partners, including municipalities, First Nations, school boards, and other community partners, as well as for Ontario as a whole.

Children will benefit from:

- being engaged in meaningful exploration and play-based learning;
- forming relationships with one another as they develop physical, emotional, and social skills;
- reflecting and valuing their culture and individual abilities as they develop cognitive and language/communication skills;
- participating in high-quality programs and services that provide stimulating, healthy, and nurturing environments from the earliest stages in life;
- easier and more timely access to other community programs and services;
- having their developmental progress monitored and programs adapted to meet their needs.

Parents, families, and caregivers will benefit from:

- receiving supports that enhance their confidence and ability to nurture their children’s healthy development;
- forming connections with other parents and caregivers in their community;
- knowing that their children are in high-quality programs, delivered by qualified staff and leaders;

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1 In this document the term “parents” is intended to include all individuals who provide the primary love, care, guidance, and support to children.
• easier access to information and timely referral to other community programs and services;
• knowing where to go to get the help they need, when they need it;
• receiving quality support in language acquisition, cultural identity, and respect.

Early years partners and service providers will benefit from:
• utilizing their skills and training to provide environments and experiences that support children and families;
• a coordinated and integrated approach that ensures programs and services are more responsive and adaptable to local needs;
• greater collaboration, expanded networks, and reduced silos and duplication;
• strong and purposeful partnerships that help maximize financial and human resources;
• contributing to the vitality of Ontario’s diverse communities including newcomers, francophones, Aboriginal people, First Nations, Métis, and Inuit.

Ontarians will benefit from:
• coordinated investments, planning, and services that maximize value from public spending and increase responsiveness;
• improved data collection, reporting, and accountability of programs and services;
• investments in the early years that improve life for Ontarians today and in the future, promote sustainability, and contribute to the growth of the economy.

**Why Are the Early Years Important?**

*Children’s experiences early in life have a profound and long-lasting impact on their future development and well-being.*

The early years are a period of intense learning and development, when tremendous changes occur in the brain over a short period of time. In the first year of life, the architecture of the brain takes shape at an astounding rate – approximately 700 new neural connections are being built *per second*. Scientists now know that this process is not genetically predetermined, but is in fact
dramatically influenced by children’s early experiences with people and their surroundings.²

Studies show that positive early years experiences lead to improved determinants of health, resulting in better social, economic, and health outcomes throughout the life cycle. The economic benefits of investments in the early years are also well-documented. Economist and Nobel laureate James Heckman calculates a seven-to-one return on public investment in programs for young children.³ More recently, TD Bank Chief Economist, Craig Alexander, noted that the widespread and long-lasting benefits of early childhood education programs far outweigh the costs.⁴

With so much potential to make a positive difference in the early years, it is imperative that we take a coordinated and thoughtful approach to the programs and services we provide. The Ontario Early Years Policy Framework builds on the immense progress made to date to support Ontario’s children and their families in the early years. The framework:

• outlines a shared vision to help us better support children’s learning and development from birth to age six;
• focuses on easy access to quality programs and services;
• moves towards an increasingly seamless service experience for children and families.

Building on Progress to Date

Since 2003, Ontario has made great strides in the effort to create a comprehensive early years system. In 2009, Dr. Charles Pascal, then the Premier’s Advisor on Early Learning, released the report With Our Best Future in Mind: Implementing Early Learning in Ontario, which provided recommendations to move Ontario towards a more integrated, seamless early years system. Building on the advice presented in the report, the government took action to introduce full-day kindergarten for Ontario’s four- and five-year-olds – the biggest transformation in our education system in a generation.

The government also took initial steps to move forward on Dr. Pascal’s recommendation to integrate child and family services and develop Best Start Child and Family Centres. Over 2010–11, the government consulted with a wide variety of individuals, communities, and stakeholder groups to seek input on a framework for Best Start Child and Family Centres. As well, an action research program was implemented to learn how to implement the Best Start Child and Family Centres concept in select Ontario communities. An innovations fund was also established to foster experiments in how to improve aspects of service delivery province-wide.

The College of Early Childhood Educators

In 2007, the Ontario government created the College of Early Childhood Educators – the first self-regulatory body in Canada overseeing a professional membership of early childhood educators. In addition to overseeing a public registry of early childhood educators, the college has succeeded in helping to professionalize the sector by establishing registration requirements, developing a professional code of ethics, and setting standards of practice that all registered early childhood educators are expected to meet.

To build better connections and improve coordination between early learning programs (such as full-day kindergarten) and child care, a new governance structure for early learning and child care was created under the Ministry of Education. This aligns Ontario with other cutting-edge jurisdictions around the world and supports the seamless and integrated provision of child care and education programs and services.

Most recently, the government made a commitment to modernize the child care system through the release of the Modernizing Child Care in Ontario: Sharing Conversations, Strengthening Partnerships, Working Together discussion paper in June 2012. Building on the feedback we received, we are actively taking steps to strengthen and transform the sector.

The Ontario Early Years Policy Framework is the next step in building a cohesive and coordinated early years system across the province. The framework complements other key government priorities and initiatives currently in place across a number of sectors. These include the Politique d’aménagement linguistique, Ontario’s Poverty Reduction Strategy, the Aboriginal Education Strategy, the Youth Action Plan, and the Comprehensive Mental Health and Addictions Strategy, as well as our work on bullying prevention and the reduction of childhood obesity.
Guiding Principles to Support the Vision

To support Ontario’s vision for the early years, this framework is driven by four guiding principles:

• Programs and services are centred on the child and the family.
• Programs and services are of high quality.
• Strong partnerships are essential.
• Programs and services are publicly accountable.

Child- and Family-Centred Programs and Services

Children and families always come first. Programs and services must be easy for parents to access, and the need for transitions between programs and services should be minimized. Early identification and intervention services must be available for children in need of supports. Programs and services must be culturally responsive and adaptable to local community needs.

Our Commitment to All Children

“What we want is to see the child in pursuit of knowledge, and not knowledge in pursuit of the child.” – George Bernard Shaw

We view children as competent, capable of complex thinking, curious, and rich in potential. They grow up in families with diverse social, cultural, and linguistic perspectives. Every child should feel that he or she belongs, is a valuable contributor to his or her surroundings, and deserves the opportunity to succeed. When we recognize children as capable and curious, we are more likely to deliver programs and services that value and build on their strengths and abilities.

Quality Programs and Services

High-quality programs and services can have an extraordinary and long-lasting impact on children’s development. To achieve this, program approaches must be attuned to children’s development; value children as creative, active learners; and demonstrate respect for diversity, equity, and inclusion. Also, early years professionals must be knowledgeable, responsive, and reflective, and continuous professional learning opportunities should be encouraged.
Our Commitment to Quality

Quality is a central component of the Ontario Early Years Policy Framework and programming will be guided by the principles of the Early Learning Framework:

- Early childhood sets the foundation for lifelong learning, behaviour, health, and well-being.
- Play and inquiry are learning approaches that capitalize on children’s natural curiosity and exuberance.
- An intentional, planned program supports learning and smooth transitions.
- Partnerships with families and communities are essential.
- Respect for diversity, equity, and inclusion is vital.
- Knowledgeable, responsive, and reflective educators are essential.

Strong Partnerships

A common provincial framework can guide action, but change will not be possible without the shared commitment and participation of many different partners. Strong and sustainable partnerships must be built on a commitment to recognize unique strengths and work towards common goals and outcomes. In the French-language minority setting, strong culturally sensitive partnerships are a cornerstone of the community’s vitality. Strategic collaboration among all levels of government, First Nations, school boards, and other community partners must be led by a commitment to provide high-quality programs and services for children and their families. Collaboration must also seek to maximize financial and human resources.
Our Commitment to Partnerships

The Role of Municipalities

At the municipal level, Consolidated Municipal Service Managers and District Social Services Administration Boards act as system managers to plan and deliver community-based early years programs and services governed and funded by the Ministry of Education.

As local experts, municipalities are attuned to the complex and often differing needs of the communities they serve. They provide leadership to local service providers, school boards, and community partners; break down barriers; and establish connections between programs and services. Many guide local planning tables and find other innovative ways to connect and work with community partners.

Today, and even more so in the future, our ability to improve system integration will depend on municipalities taking a lead role in working with partners, including school boards and community service providers, to initiate and sustain locally based planning and development under the shared vision of the Ontario Early Years Policy Framework.

The Role of First Nations

Many First Nations in Ontario administer locally relevant early years services within their communities. As experts on the cultural and political landscape of their communities, it is important to ensure that First Nations play an active role in the development and approach to early years programs that meet their local community needs.

The provincial and federal governments play a significant role in First Nations early years programming on reserve. Making progress for the benefit of First Nations children requires active partnership between First Nations and the provincial and federal governments. This is why the Ontario government has committed to a formal tripartite process with First Nations and federal partners to discuss child care and early learning programs on reserve and ensure that First Nations children can access the supports and services they need to succeed. Significant progress, however, cannot be achieved without our federal partners.
The Role of School Boards

With full-day kindergarten soon to be available in all of Ontario’s publicly funded schools by September 2014, school boards are increasingly becoming active agents of early years program planning and delivery. With the introduction of the government’s Schools-First Child Care Capital Retrofit Policy in 2012, school boards are playing an even greater role in integrating and coordinating early years programs and providing an environment where services can be co-located for the convenience of parents and families.

As important community hubs, schools play a key role in identifying local needs and priorities. This is especially the case in French-language school boards that have a unique mandate under the Politique d’aménagement linguistique. In francophone communities across the province, early years programs are instrumental for the acquisition of culture and language. For many years, French-language school boards have offered full-day programs for four- and five-year-olds and led the development of programs designed from a community perspective to reach children at the earliest stages in life. With creative partnerships underway, many early years programs in francophone communities promote a schools-first approach and provide an excellent example of what program integration can look like. An increase in student enrolment and consistent improvement in student success bear witness to the importance of a coordinated approach to the early years.

Moving forward, school boards, working with other early years partners, will continue to play an important role in shaping local early years services and advancing the vision of the Ontario Early Years Policy Framework.

The Role of Community Partners

In addition to municipalities and school boards, other community partners continue to play an important role working both inside and outside school settings. Many long-standing community organizations provide dedicated, caring, and quality services for children, including children with a range of abilities. As a result of their day-to-day interaction with families and other service providers, they are experts in the needs of their communities and knowledgeable about the programs and services available. In some instances, as is the case in francophone communities for example, organizations have formed collaborative partnerships to design and deliver programs that address gaps in services.
Community organizations also offer unique perspectives, as they understand the specific needs of the unique populations they serve. For example, our Aboriginal, First Nation, Métis, and Inuit partners are best positioned to understand the unique landscape and needs of Aboriginal early years settings.

As we move forward, early years partners must continue to come together to engage in dialogue and partnerships with the goal of creating a shared culture and commitment to quality and convenience – for families first – regardless of where the program or service is physically located.

Public Accountability

A shared accountability framework supports partners and service providers by establishing common language and progress measures for early years programs and services. The collection of meaningful data is an important feature of an accountability framework and enables evidence-based planning, decision making, and program evaluation. It also facilitates a regular cycle of public reporting to highlight achievements, value for money, and areas for improvement.

Our Commitment to Accountability

We will work to build a shared accountability structure for early years programs and services and set the groundwork for program monitoring and public reporting. This will allow us to better document child outcomes across programs and services and understand what is and what is not working, so that programs and services can better meet the needs of children and families.
Priority Areas for Action

1. Continue with the implementation of full-day kindergarten

In 2010, the government began transforming Ontario’s education system with the province-wide introduction of full-day kindergarten. The program is designed to give children a stronger start in school and in life by helping them develop valuable skills that give them every opportunity to succeed. Supported by provincial investments, full-day kindergarten is being phased in over a five-year period and now reaches approximately 122,000 children or nearly half of Ontario’s four- and five-year-olds. When fully implemented by 2014, the program will reach approximately 250,000 children.

Ontario’s full-day kindergarten program is unique. For the first time in the history of education in this province, teachers and early childhood educators are working together in teams to deliver a full day of play-based learning guided by the principles set out in The Full-Day Early Learning–Kindergarten Program (Draft Version, 2010–11), which incorporates the concepts presented in the Early Learning Framework. Full-day kindergarten also involves integrated before- and after-school programs (subject to parental demand) delivered on school sites by school boards or licensed child care providers. This unique feature is convenient for parents and provides them with the peace of mind that their children are well looked after in rich, stimulating environments.

So far, we are seeing a strong impact from full-day kindergarten. Preliminary results indicate that full-day kindergarten is contributing to improvements in children’s language and cognitive development, social competence, as well as communication and general knowledge.5

Moving forward

As a key part of the Ontario Early Years Policy Framework, we will continue to implement full-day kindergarten and ensure that all four- and five-year-olds are able to attend the program by 2014.

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5 These findings are consistent with the findings of researchers in the field of education. See J. Pelletier, Key Findings from Year 1 of Full-Day Early Learning Kindergarten in Peel (Toronto: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto, 2012).
As we move forward, we will continue to work with school boards to ensure that teachers and early childhood educators are well supported in their roles. We will also revise *The Full-Day Early Learning–Kindergarten Program* to incorporate learning from the first three years of implementation.

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**Full-day kindergarten milestones at a glance**

Full-day kindergarten for all four- and five-year-olds in Ontario is being phased in over a five-year period from 2010 to 2014.

- **September 2010:** 35,000 four- and five-year-olds – approximately 15 per cent of the province’s total kindergarten population – participate in the first year of the program.
- **September 2011:** 50,000 four- and five-year-olds – approximately 20 per cent of all kindergarten children – participate in the program.
- **September 2012:** 122,000 four- and five-year-olds – approximately 49 per cent of all kindergarten children – participate in the program.
- **September 2013:** 184,000 four- and five-year-olds – approximately 75 per cent of all kindergarten children – participate in the program.
- **September 2014:** Full-day kindergarten is fully implemented and available to all of Ontario’s four- and five-year-olds.
With Ontario leading the way, the Council of Ministers of Education endorses play-based learning

The Council of Ministers of Education believes that purposeful, play-based early learning sets the stage for future learning, health, and well-being. In the Council of Ministers of Education Statement on Play-Based Learning (2012), the council describes the benefits of play, as recognized by the scientific community, early learning experts, and children and families alike.

Learning through play is supported by science
- Scientific evidence demonstrates that neural pathways in the brains of children are built through the exploration, thinking, problem solving, and language expression that occur during play.

Learning through play is supported by experts
- Experts such as Lev Vygotsky identify play as a leading source of social, emotional, physical, language, and cognitive development. Intentional play-based learning allows children to investigate, ask questions, solve problems, and engage in critical thinking.

Learning through play is supported by children and families
- Children themselves are naturally driven to play, and early learning through play often takes the form of manipulating objects, acting out roles, and experimenting with different materials.
- Parents also understand that play is valuable to development, allowing children to construct, challenge, and expand their understanding of the world around them.
2. Create an effective approach to implementing Best Start Child and Family Centres

The government is committed to helping give children the best possible start in life and helping parents balance the demands of work and family. That’s why the government has invested approximately $90 million per year in family support programs such as Ontario Early Years Centres, Parenting and Family Literacy Centres, Child Care/Family Resource Centres, and Better Beginnings, Better Futures. These programs are an important part of local communities. They offer opportunities for children’s early learning through play, support parents and families in their role as primary caregivers, and provide a variety of other services.

Despite the many benefits of family support programs, through our consultations on the concept of Best Start Child and Family Centres, we heard from parents and caregivers that they:

- find it difficult to navigate the current set of programs and services for young children;
- want a more streamlined and efficient service experience and want the resources in the system to be better utilized;
- have serious concerns about waiting for services and want access to consistent services regardless of where they live;
- rely on internet resources for information about programs and services and want timely access to a wide variety of community resources through an easily identifiable physical location or an up-to-date virtual website.

Moving forward

As a key part of the Ontario Early Years Policy Framework, we will work with our partners to create an effective approach to implementing Best Start Child and Family Centres by September 2014. Informed by the advice in With Our Best Future in Mind: Implementing Early Learning in Ontario, this will involve:

- establishing a common governance structure for family support programs, child care, and full-day kindergarten by transferring responsibility for implementing Best Start Child and Family Centres to the Ministry of Education;
- establishing a common mandate and identity by using the current levels of investment to integrate family support programs in Ontario Early Years Centres, Parenting and Family Literacy Centres, Child Care/Family Resource Centres, and Better Beginnings, Better Futures;
- creating a core set of expectations that identifies expected outcomes and services that families can expect to access;
- developing and maintaining strong and effective partnerships between early years service providers and ensuring communities have the flexibility they need to adapt services to meet local needs;
• working with First Nation partners and the federal government to build on existing programs and services on reserve;
• developing strategies and resources that support parents in making informed and timely decisions about services and supports for their children.

As we move forward with an effective approach to implementing Best Start Child and Family Centres, we will capitalize and build on existing successful practices, applicable action research and innovation fund results, collaborative efforts, and community networks, while leveraging the extensive knowledge and expertise of dedicated early years professionals and volunteers working in these programs. This is an important step in the development of an integrated and seamless early years system that meets the unique needs of diverse communities, including newcomers, francophones, Aboriginal people, First Nations, Métis, and Inuit.

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**The Best Start Child and Family Centres will:**

• provide families and caregivers with universally accessible programs, services, and resources in easily accessible locations, and will be supported by an easy-to-use provincial website;
• provide quality programming that supports play and inquiry-based learning opportunities for children, guided by the principles of the *Early Learning Framework*;
• deliver programs led by qualified staff teams that include at least one registered early childhood educator;
• provide access to information and referral to help families access screening, assessment, and other specialized services in the community as needed;
• offer programs that are flexible and adaptable to local community needs.
What families can expect from Best Start Child and Family Centres

When parents, families, and other caregivers enter the doors of a Best Start Child and Family Centre, they will be welcomed into an intentionally structured, drop-in, play-based learning environment where all families can meet, share, play, and feel supported. Registered early childhood educators and other early years professionals will facilitate relationships and connections with children and their families. They will provide environments and experiences that engage children in active, creative, and meaningful exploration and play-based learning, and that help parents continue these experiences at home.

Trained staff will also support parents by providing them with the right information and supports at the right time. They will be available to answer questions and provide more specific direction on how to access various resources and services that can help them in the community, such as libraries, health care, family counselling, and children’s development programs.

For families who need more intensive, specialized, or focused support in parenting or other assessment and intervention services, staff at the Best Start Child and Family Centres will provide information about, and help broker access to, other programs and services throughout the community.

3. Improve the delivery of speech and language services

Currently, speech and language services are provided to children and youth through five different programs run by three different ministries. We have heard from parents and professionals that these services are fragmented, there are waitlists for both assessment and intervention services, and there are difficult transitions between community and school-based services.

We know that more can be done to improve the service experience for children and families accessing speech and language services. Last year, the three ministries responsible for the delivery of these services, the Ministry of Children and Youth Services together with the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and the Ministry of Education, launched a number of demonstration projects that will identify strengths, challenges, lessons learned, effective practices, and emerging considerations, which will help to improve the delivery of speech and language services for children across the province.
Moving forward

As we move forward, the Ministry of Children and Youth Services, working with partners across ministries and in communities, will re-engineer speech and language services to:

- improve service access for children and families;
- reduce unnecessary duplication of assessments;
- reduce fragmentation of services;
- create improved service continuity for children and families, for example, as they enter school.

4. Stabilize and transform the child care system

The government is committed to working with partners to transition and modernize the child care sector. While the provision of child care in Ontario has many strengths, we need to continue to develop a stronger, higher quality, and accessible system. That is why we recently announced additional investments to support the child care sector, bringing Ontario’s investments in child care to more than $1 billion – an increase of 90 per cent since 2003–04. We also released the discussion paper Modernizing Child Care in Ontario: Sharing Conversations, Strengthening Partnerships, Working Together to seek input on how to strengthen the child care sector to provide families with access to safe, reliable, and high-quality child care services. From this discussion paper, we received excellent advice on how to move forward.

The government is taking the next steps to modernize the child care sector. The release of the government’s Schools-First Child Care Capital Retrofit Policy in 2012 is aimed at helping child care operators retrofit and convert their existing child care spaces in schools to serve younger children and improve seamless service and convenience for families. Most recently, the government also introduced a more equitable, transparent, and streamlined child care funding formula and funding framework starting in 2013. The new funding approach better responds to demand for services and more effectively meets the needs of municipalities, child care operators, and families. The government also announced significant new investments in 2012 and 2013 to support First Nations child care on reserve.
Moving forward

As a key part of the Ontario Early Years Policy Framework, the government remains committed to the other important components of child care modernization to stabilize and transition the child care sector, mitigate closures, and ensure families have access to high-quality child care. Following feedback received during the consultation process, work is underway to:

- develop a comprehensive framework to guide programming in licensed child care and family support settings, building on the work of the Best Start Expert Panel on Early Learning and the principles of the Early Learning Framework;
- develop and implement an “Aménagement linguistique” framework for the early years within the French-language education system;
- review the Day Nurseries Act, Ontario’s child care legislation, to strengthen the safety and quality of licensed child care and support more providers to become licensed to ensure parents have access to high-quality child care choices;
- better support children with a range of abilities in licensed child care;
- work with Aboriginal, First Nation, Métis, and Inuit partners to understand the child care landscapes on and off reserve and to explore culturally sensitive and locally relevant approaches to child care in First Nation communities, and in off-reserve Aboriginal settings;
- continue to strengthen the capacity and leadership of the child care sector, including child care supervisors, early childhood educators, and other professionals who work with children to deliver high-quality programs for families;
- develop resources to help parents understand the key elements of high-quality child care.

As we move forward with these efforts, we look forward to continued collaboration with our partners in building a more robust, high-quality, and coordinated child care system for children and families.
Supporting transitions for children in the early years and beyond

Based on the work of the Best Start Expert Panel on Early Learning, the Early Learning Framework guides curriculum development for early childhood programs from birth to school age, including full-day kindergarten. The development of a comprehensive framework to guide programming in licensed child care and family support settings will help make transitions from early childhood programs to kindergarten, the primary grades, and beyond easier and more seamless for children. This will ensure that children are ready for school and that schools are ready for children.

Conclusion

The Ontario Early Years Policy Framework represents the culmination of advancements made over the last decade. The dedication and expertise of our early years partners is evident, and there are many examples of local partnerships that have resulted in better outcomes for children and families. With this foundation to build on, the Ontario Early Years Policy Framework provides strategic direction to all early years partners by setting out a clear vision and principles to guide our collective efforts in developing and delivering services to families across Ontario. It also supports our efforts to break down barriers to achieve that objective, both inside and outside government. With the demonstrated dedication and expertise of our early years partners, we are confident that together we can work towards our vision and make progress in the priority areas identified in the framework to create a high-quality, seamless service experience for children and families.
MEMORANDUM

To: Chair Sean Strickland and Members of the Community Services Committee

From: David Dirks, Director, Employment and Income Support

Copies: Douglas Bartholomew-Saunders, Commissioner, Social Services

File No.: S09-80

Subject: ONTARIO WORKS CASELOAD: JANUARY 2013

This memorandum is provided as information for members of Council. Employment & Income Support, Social Services with Finance monitors the Ontario Works (OW) caseload on a monthly basis. Below is a chart summarizing the caseload at the end of January 2013 with comparisons to the months of December 2012 and January 2012 as well as September 2008.

Very briefly,

- The OW caseload at January 2013 was: 8,611
- The OW caseload at December 2012 was: 8,429
- The increase from December 2012 was: +182 (+2.2%)
- The decrease from January 2012 was: -133 (-1.5%)
- The increase from September 2008 was: 2,319 (+37%)

- Waterloo Region unemployment rate for January 2013 was: 6.9%
- Waterloo Region unemployment rate for January 2012 was: 6.9%

Ontario Works Caseload and Unemployment Rate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>January 2013</th>
<th>December 2012</th>
<th>January 2012</th>
<th>% Change December to January</th>
<th>% Change Year to Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8,611</td>
<td>8,429</td>
<td>8,744</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>(1.5%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Unemployment Rates – Seasonally Adjusted***

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>January 2013</th>
<th>December 2012</th>
<th>January 2012</th>
<th>% Change December to January</th>
<th>% Change Year to Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Province</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>(2.5%)</td>
<td>(4.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waterloo Region</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*As revised by Statistics Canada

It is consistent with previous experience that the caseload increases in the month of January. It also reflects the increase in calls to intake from the month of December 2012. As the caseload has moved closer to the average of the past two years, it remains 37% higher than the outset of the recession.

The provision of social assistance supports the Region’s 2011-2014 Corporate Strategic Focus Area 4: Healthy and Inclusive Communities; (to) foster healthy, safe, inclusive and caring communities.

If you have any questions or comments or for further information, please contact David Dirks, Director, Employment and Income Support at 519-883-2179 or ddirks@regionofwaterloo.ca
February 7, 2013

Mrs. Gail Carlin  
Administrator, Seniors’ Services  
Sunnyside Home  
247 Franklin Street North  
Kitchener, ON  
N2A 1Y5

Dear Mrs. Carlin:

Accreditation Canada is continuing to improve the Qmentum accreditation program to make it work better for you. Starting January 2013, the time between on-site surveys will be lengthened from three to four years. This decision follows extensive consultation and recommendations stemming from the Qmentum Evaluation.

I am pleased to let you know we are extending the accreditation status of your organization for an additional year based on your high performance and ongoing commitment to quality improvement.

This means your on-site survey will take place during the same month as currently scheduled, but one year later, in 2016. As we draw closer to the expiration date on your accreditation certificate, you will receive an updated certificate that reflects this change.

As always, Accreditation Canada staff will provide support and assistance to your organization throughout the accreditation process.

If for any reason you would prefer that your on-site survey not be rescheduled to 2016, please let us know at your earliest opportunity.

Sincerely,

Suzanne Larocque  
Chair, Accreditation Decision Committee

c.c.: Ms. Marie Belanger, Quality Initiatives and Risk Management
TO: Chair Sean Strickland and Members of the Community Services Committee

DATE: February 26, 2013

FILE CODE: P14-60

SUBJECT: 2013 SCHOOL SUSPENSION UPDATE

RECOMMENDATION:

For Information

SUMMARY:

As per the *Immunization of School Pupils Act* (ISPA), Public Health is required to collect and maintain the immunization records of all students attending school in Waterloo Region. Public Health initiated its annual suspension process for elementary school students on February 7, 2013 by mailing a reminder notice to each student with an incomplete record. A total of 4,119 reminder notices were mailed. Public Health will enforce the ISPA legislation within the elementary school population on March 26, 2013.

The suspension process for the secondary school population will commence when reminder notices are mailed home on March 29, 2013. Public Health will enforce the ISPA legislation within the secondary school population on May 7, 2013.

Parents can submit their child’s immunization record in a variety of ways: online, via phone, via fax, or in person at our office. To support parents with children who still require immunization Public Health is providing walk-in clinics throughout the suspension period in both the Waterloo and Cambridge offices.

REPORT:

Background

As per the *Immunization of School Pupils Act* (ISPA), Public Health is required to collect and maintain the immunization records of all students attending school in Waterloo Region. The Act requires students to be immunized against tetanus, diphtheria, polio, measles, mumps and rubella. If students do not provide an immunization record or legal exemption (medical or religious/conscience), they face suspension from school for up to 20 days or until documentation is received.

Suspension Process

On February 7, 2013, Public Health mailed home a reminder notice (questionnaire) to each elementary student with an incomplete record. This notice is sent several weeks in advance of the official suspension date to give parents enough notice to submit their child’s immunization information to Public Health, or to have their child immunized if required. This year, Public Health printed 4,119 questionnaires. A historical perspective on the number of printed questionnaires can be found in Table 1.
Table 1: Number of questionnaires printed by suspension year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Questionnaires Printed</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>4,119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>4,356</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011*</td>
<td>6,489*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>3,071</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Kindergarten students were included in the annual suspension process starting in 2011

Public Health will enforce the ISPA legislation within the elementary school population on March 26, 2013.

The suspension process for the secondary school population will commence when reminder notices are mailed home on March 29, 2013. Public Health will enforce the ISPA legislation within the secondary school population on May 7, 2013.

Each year Public Health works to reduce the number of questionnaires sent home and the number of students suspended. To support parents with children who still require immunization, Public Health is providing walk-in clinics:

- Each Monday and Friday (starting Friday, February 15; excluding holidays) from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. in its Waterloo office (99 Regina St. S, 2nd floor)
- Each Friday (starting Friday, February 15) from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. in its Cambridge office (150 Main St., main floor)

In addition, Public Health has several ways parents can submit their child’s immunization records:

- Online at https://e-immunization.regionofwaterloo.ca/
- By phoning 519-883-2007, option 8 (8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday to Friday)
- By faxing 519-885-7260
- In-person at our Cambridge or Waterloo offices

Further updates on the suspension process will be provided at subsequent Community Services Committee meetings.

ONTARIO PUBLIC HEALTH STANDARDS:

This relates to Ontario Public Health Standards requirement #13 in the Vaccine Preventable Diseases Standard:

- Requirement #13 states, “The board of health shall comply with the Immunization Management Protocol, 2008 (or as current), that specifies the process for the assessment of the immunization status of children in licensed day care nurseries as defined in the Day Nurseries Act and the enforcement of the Immunization of School Pupils Act.”

CORPORATE STRATEGIC PLAN:

The annual suspension process relates to strategic focus area #4 (Healthy and Inclusive Communities).

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

The annual suspension process is completed with existing resources in Public Health’s budget.
OTHER DEPARTMENT CONSULTATIONS/CONCURRENCE:
NIL

PREPARED BY: Chris Harold, Manager Information and Planning (IDDSH)
Linda Black, Manager, Vaccine Preventable Diseases

APPROVED BY: Dr. Liana Nolan, Commissioner/Medical Officer of Health
TO: Chair Sean Strickland and Members of the Community Services Committee

DATE: February 26, 2013

FILE CODE: A02-40

SUBJECT: IMMIGRATION PARTNERSHIP – WATERLOO REGION

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the Regional Municipality of Waterloo enter into an agreement with the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration under the Local Immigration Partnership, dated February 26, 2013, in a form satisfactory to the Commissioner of Social Services and the Regional Solicitor;

AND THAT the 2013 Operating Budget for Social Planning, Policy and Program Administration be increased by $20,000 gross and $0 net as outlined in Report SS-13-010, dated February 26, 2013.

SUMMARY:

Nil

REPORT:

In 2006, The Regional Municipality of Waterloo (the “Region”) received funding to develop an immigration portal in Waterloo Region. The purpose of the immigration portal is to improve newcomer access to municipal information or services, promote a Region as a destination for newcomers to Canada, to provide an improved focus on immigrant or newcomer needs regarding settlement and/or employment opportunities at the local level and to provide a tangible benefit to both newcomers to Canada and the Region.

The Region partnered with numerous community stakeholders on the development of the immigration portal and has maintained the portal since its inception in 2008. Since then a number of shifts have occurred related to immigration policy and planning initiatives locally. One of these shifts has been towards the integration of services and supports in order to create a system that is easy for immigrants to access and navigate. The immigration portal is seen as the ideal platform upon which to profile employment information and to create further partnerships and integration between the community and immigrants.

Since June 2011, the Region has provided significant in-kind resources to build the site on its new platform. The first phase consisted of migrating all of the content from three existing websites (the immigration portal, the Waterloo Region Immigrant Employment Network website and the Immigration Partnership website) to create a new site. This amalgamated site was launched in June 2012 (www.immigrationwaterlooregion.ca).
The second phase consisted of the implementation of recommendations from an evaluation that was completed on the immigration portal in January 2012 and recommendations that emerged through the Immigration Partnership systems planning initiatives. While the Region continues to provide significant in-kind resources to support ongoing development of the site, the second phase was also achieved through funding provided by the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration (MCI), Immigration Policy Branch.

The third phase is to provide adequate marketing of the portal both locally and internationally, to increase traffic to the site and therefore awareness among immigrants of the opportunities provided and support networks available when they come to Waterloo Region. The Region was invited to submit a funding application through the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration, Immigration Policy Branch for marketing funds to enhance our marketing efforts. Notification was received in February 2013 that MCI would support the proposal submitted by the Region. These funds will be used for:

- Developing and purchasing promotional items for distribution to advertise the portal.
- Purchasing local and international advertising to increase visits to the portal.
- Developing and implementing training/information sessions to our partners about how to use and navigate the portal.

CORPORATE STRATEGIC PLAN:

The report supports the Region’s Corporate Strategic Plan Focus Area 4: Healthy and Inclusive Communities and Strategic objective 4.8 (to) Partner with the community to improve programs and services for immigrants and refugees. Access to coordinated on-line information about settlement programs and services will assist immigrants, refugees, service providers and community members.

The report also supports the Region’s Corporate Strategic Plan Focus Area 2: Growth Management and Prosperity: Manage growth to foster thriving and productive urban and rural communities, specifically through a diverse, innovative and globally competitive economy. Talent attraction is a key component of this strategic objective and immigration is seen as a key driver in this process. The enhanced web-site will act as an attraction tool for potential immigrants and a retention tool for those who have chosen Waterloo Region as their new home.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

The Provincial funding is $20,000 for the period February 1, 2013 to December 31, 2013. The approved funding is 100% provincial and does not require Regional contribution.

OTHER DEPARTMENT CONSULTATIONS/CONCURRENCE:

Legal Services has been consulted and has approved signing of the legal agreement. Finance provided support in reviewing project financial reporting requirements.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meeting date</th>
<th>Requestor</th>
<th>Request</th>
<th>Assigned Department</th>
<th>Anticipated Response Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>27-Nov-12</td>
<td>S. Strickland</td>
<td>That the matter of mandatory CPR and AED training for all Regional employees be referred to staff to report back with options for a Health &amp; Safety staff training policy.</td>
<td>Public Health/Human Resources</td>
<td>Jun-2013</td>
</tr>
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</table>