

**DATE:** December 18, 2023

**TO:** MAYOR AND COUNCIL

**NAME AND TITLE:** Adam Davey, Director of Public Safety

**SUBJECT:** UBCM Community Emergency Preparedness Fund,  
Emergency Support Services (ESS) – Grant Application

**ATTACHMENT(S):** None

#### RECOMMENDATION(S):

That Council:

1. SUPPORTS the City submitting a grant application to the Union of British Columbia (UBCM) Community Emergency Preparedness Fund – Emergency Support Services (ESS) in the amount of thirty thousand dollars (\$30,000) to support the ESS training plan for 2024/25 and purchase additional equipment to support ESS responses within the municipality; AND
2. AUTHORIZES the City’s Financial Officer and Director of Public Safety to sign the grant application and subsequent contract documents should grant approval be received.

#### PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is to seek a City Council resolution in support of a UBCM Community Emergency Preparedness Fund – Emergency Support Services grant to acquire additional equipment to support potential future city-centric evacuation response. The City of Prince George sought similar grants in previous years (2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2022) to procure health and safety and computer equipment for use by both the Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) and Reception Centre to streamline and modernize processes during an evacuation event.

In the past 6 months there have been three significant drivers of change within the Provincial Emergency Program. First, in October of 2023 the Provincial Emergency Disaster Management Act (EDMA) received royal assent and includes significant changes and new regulations that will impact the City’s Emergency Program and ESS delivery; also, in October the BC Ombudsperson office released its report “Fairness in a Changing Climate” which arrived at four key findings related to ESS, and twelve key recommendations for the province to act on regarding ESS. Additionally, after the 2023 wildfire season, Premier Eby stood up an “Expert Task Force on Emergencies” and set out two deliverables that specifically relate to the Provincial Emergency Support Services program and how it is delivered.

In anticipation of significant changes which are expected in the spring of 2024, the Emergency Programs divisional workplan for 2024 will focus its priority on training, including introductory level training for all ESS staff in Incident Command Systems, ESS core concepts, and continuation of Cultural Safety and Humility training. Additional focus on functional workshops in the primary functions of ESS (Registration & Referrals, Logistics, Documentation, and Meet & Greet) and applied ESS training including a regional exercise. We will also expand to include training facilitated by EMCR for providing remote ESS surge support to local authorities and first nations experiencing an emergency event.

As in previous years, Emergency Program staff continue to support the NESST (Network of Emergency Support Services Teams) conference as one of the premiere training activities for ESS Teams in the province. This year's conference will be held April 12-14, 2024 in Kamloops and offers unique training, which is not available locally, as well as build and strengthens the relationships between the City and other local authorities and First Nations, whom we regularly rely on and support during emergency responses.

In addition to the training plan, CEPF funding is being sought to purchase additional portable equipment and furniture to expand capacity to mobilize reception centres. The CEPF grant will also be used to update current temporary signage to meet accessibility standards and adding Dakelh translations to support cultural safety for local first nations.

This is an ambitious plan and CEPF grant funding will be necessary to cover the costs of facilitation.

How does the matter relate to Council's strategic plan (focus areas and priority projects)?

**SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION:**

The UBCM Community Emergency Preparedness Fund – Emergency Support Services Grant supports local governments by building capacity to provide emergency social services through training, volunteer recruitment and retention, and the purchase of equipment. It is part of a larger funding program intended to enhance the resiliency of local governments and their residents in responding to emergencies. Funding is provided by the Province of BC and is administered by the Union of BC Municipalities.

This grant will support the City's ability to activate and effectively respond to emergency events with fully trained ESS staff and will provide essential equipment needed by the ESS team to proactively respond to future events.

The evacuee events hosted in Prince George in recent years, provide an ongoing reminder that the City's Emergency Program and ESS capabilities must be regularly maintained and enhanced through modernization and training in case a future event occurs locally.

**RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:**

Adam Davey, Director of Public Safety

**PREPARED BY:** Tanya Spooner, Manager Emergency Programs and Kyle McGhee, Coordinator Emergency Programs

**APPROVED:**

Walter Babicz, City Manager  
Meeting date: January 8, 2024