

Date: October 8, 2025

To: **Mayor and Council.**

Name and title: Eric Depenau, Director of Administrative Services

Subject: 2026 UBCM Community Emergency Preparedness Fund, Emergency Support Services (ESS) Grant Application

Attachment(s): Community Emergency Preparedness Fund - Emergency Support Services Equipment and Training - November 2025 Program and Application Guide

Recommendation(s):

That Council:

1. APPROVES 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 2026/2027 and purchase additional equipment to support ESS responses within the municipality; AND
2. AUTHORIZES the City’s Financial Officer and Director of Administrative Services 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.

Background:

The City of Prince George sought similar grants in previous years (2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2022, 2024 and 2025) 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.

Since 2023 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 2023 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 2026/2027, the Emergency Programs ESS workplan for 2026 will focus its priority on further developing the City’s ESS Response plan, including the continuation of the City’s partnership with the Ministry of Emergency Management & Climate Readiness to establish a turn-key ESS reception centre site that minimizes impacts to City facilities and events during ESS Host Community events. The City’s Emergency Programs division will continue their work with regional partners in order to strengthen response across the north, while building resiliency within the City’s Emergency Programs division.

As in previous years, Emergency Program staff continue to support the NESST (Network of Emergency Support Services Teams) conference as the premiere training activities for ESS Teams in the province. The 2027 NESST conference will be held in Prince George and offers unique training, which is typically 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 congregate lodging equipment to expand capacity to mobilize group lodging during emergency events. The CEPF grant will also be used to develop a framework to support preplanning with communities that potentially could evacuate to Prince George, which will greatly enhance the City’s ability to support evacuations into the community.

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

Strategic Priorities:

The proposal to apply to the UBCM’s Community Emergency Preparedness Fund for ESS relates to the Environmental Stewardship and Climate Action strategic pillar, specifically in bolstering the resiliency of the City’s ability to respond to emergency events within municipal boundaries, as well as emergency events outside of the City’s boundaries that impact the City of Prince George such as community evacuations into the City. The proposal further ties into City Council’s advocacy for a permanent ESS reception centre within the City as part of the ongoing partnership with the Province for the provision of modular structures and support for ESS during the Spring – Fall emergency response periods.

Summary and conclusion:

The UBCM Community Emergency Preparedness Fund – Emergency Support Services Grant supports local governments by building capacity to provide emergency support 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:

Eric Depeneau, Director of Administrative Services
Prepared by: Kyle McGhee, Coordinator Emergency Programs

Approved:

Walter Babicz, City Manager

Meeting date: 2025/11/03