

## SINGLE SOURCE REQUEST - CANADIAN RED CROSS FOR EMERGENCY RESPONSE SERVICES

### Recommendation

That a single-source agreement between the City of Edmonton and The Canadian Red Cross Society for a one-year term commencing on April 15, 2024 and for an amount not to exceed \$9,000,000, including GST, for the provision of emergency shelter and support services, as outlined in the April 10, 2024 Office of the City Manager report EFRS02433 be approved and that the agreement be in a form and content acceptable to the City Manager.

<b>Requested Action</b>	Decision required		
<b>ConnectEdmonton's Guiding Principle</b>	<b>ConnectEdmonton Strategic Goals</b>		
<b>CONNECTED</b> This unifies our work to achieve our strategic goals.			
<b>City Plan Values</b>	LIVE		
<b>City Plan Big City Move(s)</b>		<b>Relationship to Council's Strategic Priorities</b>	Conditions for service success
<b>Corporate Business Plan</b>	Serving Edmontonians		
<b>Council Policy, Program or Project Relationships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bylaw 19091 - Emergency Management Bylaw</li> </ul>		
<b>Related Council Discussions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>January 23, 2024, OCM02287, Emergency Management Update</li> </ul>		

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## Executive Summary

- Reflecting a high risk of wildfires in 2024, a proactive single-source procurement of emergency response services from The Canadian Red Cross Society (“Canadian Red Cross”) is a strategic and prudent decision.
- By leveraging the expertise, capacity, and reliability of the Canadian Red Cross, Administration can better prepare to effectively address evacuee needs in reception centres when called upon to do so by the Government of Alberta.
- A proactive agreement sets the terms and conditions for anticipated work, but does not commit the City to spend these funds. If the agreement is leveraged to support a response requested by the Government of Alberta, the City of Edmonton recoups these costs through the provincial Disaster Recovery Program.

## REPORT

As a major municipality, the City of Edmonton is called upon by the Alberta Emergency Management Agency to support individuals displaced by natural disasters, including wildfires. Supporting displaced individuals requires the immediate provision of emergency accommodation services and Administration requires the support of an external organization to address the volume of requests. In 2023, the City of Edmonton assisted 11,686 people displaced by wildfires across Alberta and in Yellowknife<sup>1</sup>. Through a multi-year settlement process, Administration transfers emergency management response costs to the requesting government organization, usually the Government of Alberta.

For more than ten years, the Canadian Red Cross has played a key role in the City of Edmonton's emergency response services. The Canadian Red Cross provides the conduit between Administration's initial evacuee intake and processing, and the subsequent placement and coordination of displaced people into accommodations. Administration previously engaged the Canadian Red Cross as needed.

With a forecasted spring and summer of drought and extreme weather conditions for Edmonton and communities across Alberta,<sup>2</sup> Administration anticipates that the expenditures required to support wildfire response will exceed the City Manager's delegated authority. A proactive agreement provides a structure to the services that will be used in the upcoming wildfire season and provide Administration the ability to respond to multiple events of different magnitudes.

## Justification for Recommendation

The Canadian Red Cross has a long-standing reputation and expertise in providing emergency shelter and support services during times of crisis, trained personnel and resources making them a reliable partner in effectively managing disaster evacuations.

The proposed \$9 million for a one-year agreement with the Canadian Red Cross enables the City to have in place a key component of its reception centre planning ahead of the anticipated wildfire season. Administration recommends this approach based on the following:

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<sup>1</sup> January 23, 2024, OCM02287, Emergency Management Update

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.alberta.ca/release.cfm?xID=89769D0F4EE6C-E054-7BF8-96A3A2367916CECB>

## SINGLE SOURCE REQUEST - CANADIAN RED CROSS FOR EMERGENCY RESPONSE SERVICES

- *Expertise and experience:* The Canadian Red Cross possesses unparalleled expertise in disaster response and management. They have a proven track record of efficiently coordinating and providing emergency accommodation services during various emergencies across Canada. Relying on their experience ensures a swift and well-coordinated response to the accommodation needs of evacuees.
- *Comprehensive support services:* Accommodation services provided by the Canadian Red Cross extend beyond mere shelter provision. They offer a range of support services such as emergency lodging, transportation and family reunification as well as referrals to other essential services to complement those provided by Administration's Emergency Support Response Team and other City resources. This holistic approach helps to address the diverse needs of evacuees and contributes to their overall well-being during challenging times.
- *Efficiency and co-ordination:* The Canadian Red Cross streamlines the process of obtaining accommodation services, ensuring a more efficient and coordinated response to disaster evacuations.
- *Consistency and standardization:* Working with a single provider like the Canadian Red Cross ensures consistency and standardization in the quality of accommodation services offered to evacuees from different regions. This uniformity promotes fairness and equity in access to essential resources during times of crisis.

The proposed agreement enables emergency response continuity for the City of Edmonton, without binding Administration to spend a minimum amount for this arrangement.

### Budget/Financial Implications

The requested agreement will allow the City to engage the Canadian Red Cross as required, at negotiated rates and under set terms and conditions, up to the total amount of the agreement over a one-year period. It does not represent a spending commitment or forecast. Services secured through this agreement will ultimately be invoiced to and recouped from the province through the provincial Disaster Recovery Program. In 2023, Administration spent \$8.7 million on services from the Canadian Red Cross for three event activations. Should additional services be required, Administration will seek approval for an amendment to the agreement.

### Legal Implications

As per the City Administration Bylaw 16620, procurement agreements over \$1 million that do not arise from a competitive procurement process must be approved by the appropriate Committee of Council. The City is subject to trade agreements that require an open competitive process for procurements of this value, unless a trade agreement exemption applies. For this procurement, there is an exemption in each applicable trade agreement. Under each of the New West Partnership Trade Agreement and the Canadian Free Trade Agreement, the exemption is procurements from a non-profit organization.

### Community Insight

The City of Edmonton recognizes that a successful emergency plan and response is informed by coordinated action between individuals, communities, industry, government and other mutual aid partners. Although there are general standards on how events are managed, stakeholders

## SINGLE SOURCE REQUEST - CANADIAN RED CROSS FOR EMERGENCY RESPONSE SERVICES

work together to ensure that the response is appropriate for the particular incident or emergency. Through many activations, the Emergency Management Program has adapted and expanded the approach based on guidance from user experience. Measures to respond to diverse needs have included halal meals, ensuring the safety and security of pets, partnering with different organizations to enhance stress management and supporting religious diversity.

Administration is also mindful that a key stakeholder group is the City employees who operationalize the program. In times of stress and prolonged response, Administration determines how psychological health and safety can best be supported through the City of Edmonton's robust health and safety program. Having Red Cross resources in place allows the City to draw upon a significant sized and skilled workforce to offset the labour of the core service delivery team.

### GBA+

Specifically considering the risk to Edmonton for climate change-related events, Administration understands that the impacts are magnified for specific populations including seniors, youth and children, Indigenous peoples, racialized populations, people with disabilities, people who are pregnant, frontline emergency responders, residents of northern and remote communities, individuals who are socially and economically disadvantaged and people who are immunocompromised and those living with pre-existing illness.<sup>3</sup> Understanding who is most at risk allows the City of Edmonton's approach to be planned appropriately to varying needs.

When people are displaced due to emergencies, more significant impacts are felt by those who have disabilities, speak primary languages other than English, have limited access to immediate emergency funds and those who have experienced previous trauma. The Emergency Management Program is adaptable and has responded to many different needs and works with partners to provide people with the most appropriate support given an individual or community's situation. The Emergency Management Program adheres and aligns with the Corporate Indigenous Framework and the Corporate Accessibility Guidelines and continues to look for ways to deliver an inclusive and compassionate response to Edmontonians and any other individuals requiring the City's assistance.

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<sup>3</sup> Government of Canada. "Who is most impacted by climate change?"  
<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/climate-change-health/populations-risk.html>