

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

Supporting a Request for Assistance as a result of the Jasper Wildfire Complex

Recommendation

That an amendment to the single-source agreement between the City of Edmonton and the Canadian Red Cross Society to increase the value to an amount not to exceed \$20,000,000, including GST, for the provision of emergency shelter and support services, as outlined in the August 14, 2024, Office of the City Manager report EFRS02613, be approved and that the amending agreement be in a form and content acceptable to the City Manager.

Requested Action	Committee decision required		
ConnectEdmonton's Guiding Principle	ConnectEdmonton Strategic Goals		
CONNECTED This unifies our work to achieve our strategic goals.	N/A		
City Plan Values	LIVE		
City Plan Big City Move(s)	N/A	Relationship to Council's Strategic Priorities	Conditions for service success
Corporate Business Plan	Managing the corporation		
Council Policy, Program or Project Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bylaw 19091 - Emergency Management Bylaw 		
Related Council Discussions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> April 10, 2024 Office of the City Manager report EFRS02433 - Single Source Request - Canadian Red Cross for Emergency Response Services 		

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

Executive Summary

- On April 10, 2024, Executive Committee provided approval for the City of Edmonton to enter into a proactive single source agreement with the Canadian Red Cross for up to \$9 million to support emergency response services for the 2024 wildfire season. A proactive agreement sets the terms and conditions for anticipated work, but does not commit the City to spend these funds.
- When the agreement with the Canadian Red Cross 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.
- On July 22, 2024, the City of Edmonton received a Request for Assistance from the Government of Alberta via the Alberta Emergency Management Agency to support the response to the Jasper Wildfire Complex. As of August 14, 2024, the City of Edmonton will have utilized the majority (\$8.9 million) of its Canadian Red Cross agreement value. A spending threshold increase is required to sustain the response until displaced people can return to their community and provide flexibility should another request for assistance occur.

Background

The Canadian Red Cross has a long-standing reputation and expertise in providing emergency shelter and support services during times of crisis, and trained personnel and resources, making them a reliable partner in effectively managing disaster evacuations. To support emergency management continuity, the City of Edmonton's agreement with the Canadian Red Cross provides:

- *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. The Canadian Red Cross also has explicit commitments to anti-racism and "to deliver culturally appropriate and relevant assistance in programs in partnership with Indigenous leadership."¹
- *Capacity and comprehensive support services:* The Canadian Red Cross is part of the world's largest humanitarian network and has a presence established across the country. They have the capacity to quickly scale in response to emerging incidents, including scenarios that extend beyond municipal, regional and provincial borders. 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.

¹ Canadian Red Cross website

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

- *Efficiency and coordination:* 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.

Jasper Wildfire Complex

As of August 12, 2024, the Jasper Wildfire Complex is approximately 33,000 hectares in size and remains classified as out of control. The resulting evacuation impacted residents, area workers and visitors. Pending a conditional reentry process, the Town of Jasper and Jasper National Park remain evacuated due to active wildfires and disrupted/damaged services.

As one of several reception centres in Alberta, the City of Edmonton stood up the temporary Rapid Emergency Support Terminal at a City facility to welcome displaced people who required assistance to access supports, services and amenities.

As of August 12, 2024, the Rapid Emergency Support Terminal has supported:

- 2,531 people registering on site representing 1,433 households receiving assistance
- 908 evacuees were provided with accommodations and financial support
- 492 households currently accommodated

Specific to magnitude of the Jasper Wildfire Complex, the City of Edmonton is leveraging the Canadian Red Cross Agreement for support with:

- Registration
- Reception and information
- Referrals to relevant agencies
- Emergency food assistance through the form of per diem allowances
- Transportation
- Emergency lodging
- Personal services (eg. mobility assistance)
- Laundry services
- Emergency stock
- Safety and well-being (eg. individualized mental health and psychosocial support)

As of August 14, 2024, the City of Edmonton will have utilized \$8.9 million of the total \$9 million agreement.

Justification for Request

A conditional re-entry date for the Town of Jasper is set for August 16, 2024; however, it may take weeks for those who can safely return to their residences to do so. The City of Edmonton anticipates that several more weeks of assistance will be requested to provide a bridge to those returning to their residences or other long-term accommodations. Based on current volumes and

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

the anticipated duration of displacement, and to allow for the possibility of another request for assistance this wildfire season, Administration recommends increasing the agreement's financial threshold to \$20 million, including GST. Should additional services be required, Administration will seek approval for another amendment to the agreement.

Budget/Financial Implications

The amended 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. All costs associated with the fire mobilization, Emergency Operations Centre and evacuation support, including the expenditures for the Canadian Red Cross agreements, will be recovered from the Town of Jasper who will apply to the province for compensation through the provincial Disaster Recovery Program.

Legal Implications

As per Bylaw 16620 - City Administration Bylaw, 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 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 Canadian 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

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

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. 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.