



## REQUEST FOR DECISION

**MEETING DATE:** May 23, 2023

**TITLE:** Alberta Municipalities Resolution Submission - Enhanced Funding for Rent Assistance

**DIVISION:** Corporate Services

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### SUMMARY:

The City of Airdrie has requested that the City of Spruce Grove support and second a motion for consideration by Alberta Municipalities related to enhanced funding for the Rent Assistance and Temporary Rent Assistance benefits.

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### PROPOSED MOTION:

THAT the City of Spruce Grove act as a seconder for a resolution to be considered by Alberta Municipalities at the 2023 annual convention regarding enhanced funding for the Rent Assistance and Temporary Rent Assistance benefits.

### BACKGROUND / ANALYSIS:

Alberta Municipalities (ABMunis) conducts a resolution process that enables member municipalities to identify and prioritize common issues and solutions that empower ABMunis' Board of Directors to advocate federal and provincial governments on members' behalf. Resolutions must be adopted by the municipal council and then seconded by an additional municipality whose council also approved the resolution.

The City of Airdrie is preparing a resolution for consideration by ABMunis related to advocacy to the provincial government for enhanced funding for the Rent Assistance and Temporary Rent Assistance benefits. Specifically, the resolution calls on the provincial government to:

- establish predictable, long-term rent assistance funding to meet the needs of all low-income Albertans allowing them to access rent support for appropriate housing;
- increase awareness of rent assistance programs to provide more Albertans in core housing needs with the support that they need to ensure they have access to appropriate housing; and
- simplify the application process.

The Rent Supplement Program provides a subsidy directly to households for an accommodation of their choice to help make rent more affordable. In 2021, the Government of Alberta redesigned the Program and created two benefits, the Rent Assistance Benefit (RAB) and the Temporary Rent Assistance Benefit (TRAB). RAB is a long-term benefit available to subsidize the rent for Albertans if they are below low-income thresholds, while TRAB provides a modest subsidy for working households with low income, or those between jobs, and is intended to help eligible tenants afford their rent while they stabilize or improve their situation.

Presently the Province announces RAB and TRAB funding amounts in the Government's spring budget (prior to end of Q1 annually). The funding cycle for rent assistance program applicants is based on the calendar year, from January to December. This lack of alignment between the funding model and the term of the rent assistance program, means that Administrators must be cautious in accepting additional households in need of support until after the budget is confirmed in the first quarter of the year to avoid oversubscribing the program. In the case that additional program budget is received, Administrators must then onboard new recipients and spend the money prior to the end of the calendar year.

The TRAB was initially launched in seven Alberta urban centres. In August 2022, the temporary assistance program was expanded to include residents from more than 80 communities across the Province. While this was a welcome announcement, no additional funding was dedicated to the expanded program.

#### **OPTIONS / ALTERNATIVES:**

Council may choose not to second the resolution for consideration by ABMunis.

#### **CONSULTATION / ENGAGEMENT:**

n/a

#### **IMPLEMENTATION / COMMUNICATION:**

If approved, this resolution will be submitted to Alberta Municipalities by the City of Airdrie for consideration at the annual conference.

**IMPACTS:**

Access to stable, adequate housing is foundational to community well-being and prosperity of all Albertans. Adequately funding the rent supplement program has a direct impact on building thriving, safe, and welcoming communities for all. An expansion of funding to rent assistance programs would help meet some of the increased need of Albertans who are unable to afford housing. More funding targeted at those Albertans most in need, enhanced public education about the existence of rent assistance programs, and a simplified application process would go a long way to addressing core housing need in Alberta.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

n/a