



## STAFF REPORT

**Title:** Alberta Children's Services Ministry's New Family Resource Network

**Meeting Date:** November 12, 2019

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### **Executive Summary:**

The City of Cold Lake through its Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) and network service partners provides locally driven, preventative, social initiatives with the aim to promote healthy environments and positive experiences at critical stages in development offering the greatest benefit to individuals, families and communities.

In an announcement on November 4, 2019, effective March 31 2020 the Alberta Children's Services Ministry is cancelling approximately 450 grants and contracts with 300 organizations that operate Parent Link Centres and other aligned programs.

Administration has received letters from Alberta Children's Services and Family and Community Support Services Association of Alberta, November 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> respectively, informing the City that the grants for Parent Link services, Indigenous Enhancement and Early Childhood Coalition will end March 31, 2020.

The Alberta Children Services Ministry has announced the Family and Community Resiliency Division's new comprehensive network design for prevention and early intervention services across the province. The Government encourages interested service providers to submit an Expression of Interest by January 16, 2020.

The purpose of this report is to brief Council on the recent announcement from Alberta Children Services Ministry respecting the cancellation of funding to Parent Link Centers and the steps has taken moving forward with this shift in services delivery.

### **Background:**

In response to the recent announcements, administration has filed an Expression of Interest with Children's Services, Family and Community Resiliency Division ahead of fully comprehending service expectations. The City may up to the closing date withdraw its' Expression of Interest (EOI). On note, this is the largest procurement process the Government of Alberta has introduced in the past twenty years.

Initial observations of the Expression of Interest documents provided by Children's Services, Family and Community Resiliency Division are:

- The Parent Link Center (PLC) model has been replaced with the Family Recourse Network (FRN) model.



- The City's participating community partners has shifted to include Athabasca County, Lac La Biche and Plamondon. Previous partners were, Town of St. Paul, Town of Bonnyville and Lac La Biche County. The realignment is not yet imposed by the Government, however it is suggested the City consider the realignment.
- The five core service areas of the PLC model Early Childhood Development and Care, Parent Education, Family Support, Information and Referrals, and Developmental Screening has been replaced with three core service areas under FRN model; Child Development and Well-being, Caregiver Capacity-building, and Social Connections.
- Definition of "child" has changed to read "young people between the ages of 0 – 18". This is a significant shift as Parent Link Centres delivered services to ages 0 - 6 while child and youth programs delivered by FCSS were ages 6 - 17.
- Programs previously provide by FCSS may now be provided under the FRN model.
- Specific programs under the FRN model, e.g. in-home parenting education and family support services, may be contracted.
- FCSS service levels are expected to shift to align with the FRN model.
- Regional budget allocation presented in the documents, keeping in mind that provincial allocations are based on proposal submissions, are encouraging. Preliminary indication is that funding for the Family Resource Network (FRN) will be consistent with 2019 PLC funding allocations.

Moving forward, a number of essential information sessions are scheduled with Alberta Children Services Ministry. The City has been encouraged to submit questions prior to the first question and answer session November 14, 2019.

**Alternatives:**

Council may consider the following options:

1. Council direct administration to present a report on the new Family Resource Network (FRN) at the next Corporate Priorities Committee meeting being November 19, 2019.
2. Council may receive this report as information.

**Recommended Action:**

That Council pass a motion to refer this issue to Council's next Corporate Priorities Committee meeting, being November 19, 2019, for further review, discussion, and recommendation.

**Budget Implications (Yes or No):**

Yes

**Submitted by:**

Kevin Nagoya, Chief Administrative Officer