

To:	Warden Matrosovs and Members of Grey County Council
Committee Date:	October 9, 2025
Subject / Report No:	PSR-CW-07-25
Title:	Additional Funding to Support SOS and Extended Services
Prepared by:	Kevin McNab, Director Paramedic Services
Reviewed by:	Niall Loble, Deputy CAO
Lower Tier(s) Affected:	All

Recommendation

1. That report PSR-CW-07-25 being a report on Additional Funding to Support SOS and Extended Services, be received; and
2. That funds be flowed to partner agencies as outlined in the funding agreement that ends March 31, 2026.

Executive Summary

On July 10th, Committee of the Whole received report [PSR-CW-04-25](#) which outlined additional funding received from the Federal Government to support work targeted at rapid responses to the overdose crisis. This funding has allowed the expansion to 7-day service by the SOS (Supportive Outreach Services) team, a team that draws expertise from across the health sector to support innovative responses to crisis, meeting clients where they are at.

In September, the SOS team lead was advised that additional funding under the existing agreement, was available. An additional application was made which included:

- Additional funding to offset supervisory costs of the SOS team
- Funding to support enhanced treatment spaces at Safe and Sound for supporting clients
- Funding to support a pilot 'downtown navigator' program in Owen Sound
- Funding to support basic needs

This application was supported, and these fully funded extended services are being implemented through the fall.

Background and Discussion

The Supportive Outreach Services (SOS) program, launched in 2021 in response to the opioid crisis and rising homelessness in Grey County, provides compassionate, community-based care to vulnerable populations. Its goal is to reduce overdoses and opioid-related deaths through harm reduction and holistic support.

SOS offers life-saving interventions such as overdose reversal, naloxone distribution, drug checking, mental health and addiction services. By meeting people where they are, the program builds trust, reduces stigma, and connects individuals to care, easing pressure on emergency services. This outreach approach helps those who avoid traditional health systems feel safe seeking help, fostering recovery and healthier communities.

In summer, 2025, SOS sought and was awarded additional Federal funding directed at supporting rapid responses to the opioid and overdose crisis impacting communities across Canada. This has allowed for the expansion of SOS services to 7-days a week, and expansion that has taken effect over recent weeks.

In September, staff were invited to apply for additional short-term funding under the same agreement, to develop further interventions to support responses to overdose pressures. This funding is available for work up to March 2026.

The funding extension came with a short review and application period and between SOS partners a short list of potential supports was identified:

- 1) The existing SOS team is supervised and administered as part of the Grey County Paramedic program. Supervisory staff is included within the Paramedic model and partially offset by external grants and funds. To help further offset these costs, a request was made for additional supervisory/administrative funds.
- 2) The work of SOS is undertaken where clients are at, and the funding awarded in summer is equipping a dedicated vehicle to help provide these services in a dignified environment. The team also frequently works in spaces that community use, and an opportunity to develop dignified and dedicated space within Safe and Sound as it expands services this fall was identified. Additional capital funding to support Safe and Sound in developing a space where clients and SOS staff can connect was requested.
- 3) Through community engagement and feedback, particularly from the business community in Owen Sound, staff are aware of ongoing concerns related to homelessness and substance use. Providing a direct service in response to this has been identified as a priority and an application was made to support a pilot downtown navigator program. This program will provide 7-day a week support across downtown Owen Sound to help respond to folks in need of support, addressing disposal of needles and other issues. Two teams of two staff will actively patrol Owen Sound, connecting with individuals and businesses and providing a phone-based response service to downtown concerns. The program is being led by Safe and Sound and will begin in mid-October, 2025 and run as a pilot until March, 2026.

A request for an additional \$432,400 was successfully made.

- \$188,100 will be allocated to supporting the 4 staff undertaking the navigator role,
- \$94,300 is allocated to materials, supplies and equipment for items to support clients, and
- \$150,000 is allocated toward the creation of space within Safe and Sound to support clients.

The funds requested were supported and have been added to the existing funding agreement. No additional or matching contribution is needed.

Financial and Resource Implications

An additional small, offset of existing administration costs of Grey County Paramedics is included within the grant. However, the majority of the grant is a flow through to partner agencies providing services without any budget impact to Grey County. The estimated portion of the grant and related expenses that will be carried over for use from January 2026 to March 2026 will be included in the 2026 budget.

Relevant Consultation

- Internal (list)
 - AODA Compliance (describe)
 - Contribution to Climate Change Action Plan Targets (describe)
- External (list)

Appendices and Attachments

None.