



STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

Receiving funds for Involve Youth Program and service delivery agreement with a community-based agency

Date:	March 19, 2007
To:	Community Development and Recreation Committee
From:	Social Development, Finance and Administration
Wards:	Ward 1, Ward 15, Ward 39, Ward 40, Ward 35, Ward 37, Ward 38
Reference Number:	

SUMMARY

This report seeks approval to accept funds from the Department of Canadian Heritage and the United Way of Greater Toronto. This funding is to enhance youth civic engagement opportunities in four priority neighbourhoods through the program model, Involve Youth. This report also seeks approval to enter into a purchase of service agreement with the community-based delivery agency, Tropicana Community Services to deliver the Involve Youth Program.

Involve Youth will begin in April 2007 and run until March 2010.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Social Development, Finance and Administration recommends that:

1. City Council authorize the Executive Director of Social Development, Finance and Administration to enter into agreement with Canadian Heritage to receive funds in an amount not to exceed \$408,098 as the program costs for the Involve Youth;
2. City Council authorize the Executive Director of Social Development, Finance and Administration to enter into agreement with United Way of Greater Toronto to receive funds in an amount not to exceed \$500,000 as the program costs for the Involve Youth;
3. City Council authorize the Executive Director of Social Development, Finance and Administration to enter into a service agreement with Tropicana Community Services for the delivery of the Involve Youth not to exceed \$908,098;
4. the Social Development, Finance and Administration Division's 2007 Operating Budget be increased by \$432,806.00 gross, zero net.

Financial Impact

Involve Youth is a fully funded program through the joint contributions of the Department of Canadian Heritage and the United Way of Greater Toronto. There are no net impacts on the 2007 operating budget arising from the adoption of this report. The Social Development, Finance and Administration budget will be adjusted by \$432,806.00 gross, zero net, to reflect the 2007 funding of this program.

Budget Years	Source of Funds	Total Adjustments
2007	Department of Canadian Heritage United Way of Greater Toronto	\$432,806.00
2008	Department of Canadian Heritage United Way of Greater Toronto	\$339,146.00
2009	Department of Canadian Heritage	\$136,146.00

The Deputy City Manager and Chief Financial Officer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information.

DECISION HISTORY

The Mayor's Platform emphasizes the City's continuing support for meaningful civic engagement opportunities for young people. Initiatives like the "Youth for Toronto" partnership program, the expansion of youth training and life skills development, and the

creation of a civic engagement office reinforce the City's commitment to positive opportunities for youth to develop skills, engage in community service and participate in neighbourhood-building.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

The Pilot Project in Jamestown

From May to December 2005, the City of Toronto piloted Involve Youth as a youth engagement project in Jamestown. The pilot was supported by funding from the Ontario Works Incentive Fund as part of the Neighbourhood Action initiative to provide more coordinated and effective services to youth in vulnerable neighbourhoods.

In the Jamestown Pilot, one youth engagement coordinator and two youth facilitators were hired from the local community to recruit a group of youth to take part in the project. Over 35 young people received leadership and life-skills training, went on educational field trips, and participated in community-building activities. For many local youth, the pilot was an important opportunity to become involved in their neighbourhoods in a positive way and to begin to rebuild positive adult-youth relationships in the community. The project raised local and institutional interest in supporting a larger Rexdale Youth Council to enable youth engagement in local planning and decision-making.

Building on the Success of the Jamestown Pilot

Learning from the Jamestown experience, the City is interested in increasing our investment in youth engagement in City planning and decision-making, particularly at the neighbourhood level. Involve Youth incorporates the best elements of the Jamestown model -- intentional learning and skill development, decision-making and leadership, identity supports and social awareness. These elements will be used to create a local structure of support for African Canadian youth and other racialized youth in priority neighbourhoods to effectively lead and engage in neighbourhood-based decision-making and action.

COMMENTS

Tri-level Commitment to Youth Civic Engagement

The City of Toronto is working closely with other orders of governments and major institutions to invest in 13 neighbourhoods which have been identified as being under-serviced and at risk of negative outcomes. Creating meaningful youth engagement opportunities for the youth who live in the priority neighbourhoods is a central element of the collective strategy.

The Involve Youth Program is an important enhancement to the youth engagement work underway in priority neighbourhoods. It is based on the need to increase civic engagement, particularly among racialized youth in vulnerable neighbourhoods and remove barriers to their participation in the various decision-making and consultative processes in which the City and other institutions are involved. Through Involve Youth, funded by the Department of Canadian Heritage and the United Way of Greater Toronto, the City of Toronto can deepen its commitment to youth civic engagement in local governance processes. Neighbourhood young people will be supported to build their skills, confidence and ability to engage with decision-making processes. The Involve Youth project will continue the work begun in Jamestown and extend youth civic engagement to three other priority neighbourhoods: Lawrence Heights, Eglinton East-Kennedy Park and Steeles-L'Amoreaux.

The Community-based Delivery Agent

Involve Youth will be delivered through Tropicana Community Services, a community-based delivery agency who has expertise in program delivery for racialized young people in the priority neighbourhoods. Since 2004, Tropicana Community Services has successfully partnered with the City of Toronto and the Province of Ontario to successfully deliver the Jobs for Youth Program in priority neighbourhoods to support African-Canadian youth obtain summer employment.

CONTACT

Denise Campbell,
Manager, Community Development
Social Development, Finance and Administration,
Telephone: 416-392-0103
Fax: 416-392-8492
Email: dcampbe6@toronto.ca

SIGNATURE

Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration,