

2017 Allocations Recommendations: Community Investment Fund - Projects & Events, Capacity Building

Date: October 6, 2017

To: Community Development and Recreation Committee

From: Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration

Wards: All

SUMMARY

A comprehensive review of five Investment Fund grant programs, in consultation with the not-for-profit sector, was conducted over 2016/17. City Council approved the resulting three new grant programs in March, 2017: Community Projects & Events grants, Neighbourhood Micro Grants (rebranded to Neighbourhood Grants), and Capacity Building grants and several process improvements to grant administration.

The new framework merges the previous five grant programs into three that will better support new and emerging groups, enhance sector resilience, encourage resident engagement and leadership development, and advance Council-approved social development strategies. Activities supported by former grant programs are still eligible for funding. The existing Community Crisis Response Fund was incorporated into the new grant framework as a component of the Neighbourhood Grant program.

The streamlined grant process significantly improved response time: Applicants are informed of the outcome of their application within one-month compared to the previous average of four months. The process increased the percentage of grassroots groups (groups with less than \$249,000 in annual operating funding) short-listed. The new process also doubled the approval rate of organizations that submitted full proposals, now averaging 57%.

This report recommends the following 2017 allocations from Community Investment Fund under the new grant framework:

- **Community Projects & Events:** Of the two hundred and two (202) eligible Letters of Intent submitted by community groups to the new Community Projects & Events grant program, sixty three (63) were shortlisted by City staff to proceed to the full

application stage of the grant process. Thirty-six (36) proposals are recommended for funding by a grant review panel for a funding total of \$703,806.

- Neighbourhood Grant: A reallocation of an additional \$60,000 to the Crisis Response Fund, created last year as a response to the heightened incidences of violence, for a total funding commitment from the City in 2017 of \$110,000 to meet current community demand.
- Capacity Building: \$16,670 to the Local Champions Pilot, a certificate/college credit training program for residents from Neighbourhood Improvement Areas and Emerging Neighbourhoods to advance the Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy 2020 and the Toronto Poverty Reduction Strategy. A report on the future funding of this pilot will be submitted for Council approval in November, 2017.
- Capacity Building: \$155,000 allocation to operate the Rexdale Community Hub.
- Capacity Building: \$50,000 allocation to Toronto Aboriginal Support Services Council to build the capacity of Indigenous organizations to take part in meaningful engagement and service planning with the City in support of the City's Statements of Commitment.

Grants help the City of Toronto achieve its social, economic and cultural goals for its residents. The City's goals are better achieved by supporting the work of organizations that are closer to the communities they serve.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration recommends that:

1. City Council approve allocations for the following Investment Funding program, as recommended in Appendices A, B and C, from the 2017 Approved Operating Budget for Social Development, Finance and Administration:

- Total funding of \$435,420 to seventeen (17) community organizations for the Community Projects grant stream;
- Total funding of \$168,386 to nineteen (19) community organizations for the Community Events grant stream;
- A combined total of up to \$100,000 be held for Appeals for Community Projects & Events grant streams.

2. City Council approve the reallocation of an additional \$60,000 from Community Investment Funding to the Crisis Response Fund and authorize the Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration to approve, issue and enter into agreements for Crisis Response Fund allocations;

3. City Council allocate \$16,670 to the Local Champions Pilot to continue the program to the end of the year and to realign the funding term to the calendar year;

4. City Council allocate \$155,000 to operate the Rexdale Community Hub Board of Management for one year;

5. City Council allocate \$50,000 to the Toronto Aboriginal Support Services Council (TASSC) to build the capacity of their member organizations as they play a key role in guiding and enabling the City's work with the Indigenous Community;
6. City Council authorize the Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration to reallocate 2017 Community Investment Fund to eligible community organizations during the funding period; and,
7. City Council request the Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration to report back to the Community Development and Recreation Committee on any re-allocation of 2017 Community Investment Fund as part of the 2018 grants allocation recommendations report.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The recommendations in this report will have no impact beyond what has already been included in the 2017 Approved Operating Budget for Social Development, Finance and Administration.

This report recommends allocations totalling \$985,476.00.

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

DECISION HISTORY

The City of Toronto provides support to the not-for-profit sector through funding programs under the general authority for making municipal grants provided in Section 83 of the City of Toronto Act, 2006 (S.O. 2006, c.11).

On March 28, 2017 City Council approved the introduction of three grant streams: Community Projects & Events, and Neighbourhood Micro Grant (rebranded to Neighbourhood Grants), and Capacity Building as part of the new Community Investment Funding framework to advance Council approved social development strategies and support City divisional service plans.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2017.CD18.5>

On March 28, 2017 City Council approved delegated authority to the Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration Division to approve, issue and enter into agreements for neighbourhood micro-grants to selected proponents and report back to the Community Development and Recreation Committee on awards made to the selected grant recipients.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2017.CD18.5>

On June 7, 2016 City Council approved the creation of the Local Champions Pilot to develop and deliver a “train the trainer” capacity development certification/college credit

pilot that target residents living in the 31 Neighbourhood Improvement Areas and Emerging Neighbourhoods.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2016.CD12.4>

On July 12, 2016 City Council approved the reallocation from the Community Investment Funding program of \$50,000 to fund locally-driven neighbourhood activities that immediately respond to critical incidences of violence as the City of Toronto contribution to the Intervention Fund (renamed Crisis Response Fund), and approved delegated authority to the Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration Division to approve, issue and enter into agreements for Crisis Response Fund grants to selected proponents.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2016.MM20.2>

On October 2, 2017 Council directed the Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration to consult with Rexdale Community Hub Board and tenants to review and identify an appropriate City governance model for the Rexdale Community Hub and required resources, and report to the October 23, 2017 Community Development and Recreation Committee meeting.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2017.CD22.13>

In a report entitled: Statement of Commitment to Aboriginal communities in Toronto – Towards A Framework for Urban Aboriginal Relations in Toronto on May 27th 2010, the City of Toronto committed to building the capacity of Indigenous Organizations <http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2010/ex/bgrd/backgroundfile-30866.pdf>

COMMENTS

1. Community Projects & Events - Launch of New Community Investment Funding Programs

On March 28, 2017 City Council approved the new Community Investment Funding (CIF) framework. The new framework merges the previous five grant programs into three that will: better support new and emerging groups, enhance sector resilience, encourage resident engagement and leadership development, and advance Council-approved social development strategies.

All grant programs in the Community Investment Fund are now aligned with the new framework:

- Community Projects & Events program advances the Toronto Poverty Reduction Strategy and the Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy 2020 (TSNS);
- Neighbourhood Grants program funds activities that advance TSNS. The Community Crisis Response grants (an example of a Neighbourhood Grant) advance the work of the City's Crisis Response unit; and,
- Capacity Building grants includes the Local Champions and Organizational Mentor pilots and is a response to the Council directive to support more grassroots groups

and a resilient sector. It includes one-time grants such as those to community hubs. A comprehensive funding model for the Capacity Building stream will be brought forward for Council approval in the first quarter of 2018.

The five previous grant streams are: Community Recreation and Festivals (now merged into Community Events); and Access, Equity & Human Rights, Community Safety Investment, and Service Development Investment Program (now merged into Community Projects). Activities previously funded through the former programs are eligible for funding in the new programs.

One of the two critical changes in the new Community Investment Funding framework is the shift towards investing in projects and events that advance the following Council approved social development strategies: Poverty Reduction, Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods, Toronto Youth Equity, Toronto Seniors, Toronto Newcomers, and Human Trafficking. These strategies support City's divisional service plans such as the Equity Diversity and Human Right's Strategic Plan, Recreation Service Plan and Parks Plan. Applicants have to demonstrate how their Projects or Events align with the strategies.

The second shift was in internal grant making processes. Staff fine-tuned the processes to increase opportunities for new, emerging and grassroots groups to get access to funding. These changes are outlined below.

To continue to be responsive to the community sector and to ensure the new guidelines and applications were accessible and user friendly, staff engaged a small group of volunteer leaders, program staff, and executive directors from community organizations who volunteered their time and expertise in the development and roll out of the Projects & Events grant program.

The mandate of Community Investment Fund grants has not changed: grants are to fund one-off and stand-alone initiatives; funding is not for programs and services.

The new Community Projects & Events Grant Program was launched in May, 2017.

Community Events Grant Goals

Community Events Grants help organizations create a neighbourhood event or activity that brings different groups of people together to make their neighbourhood better, keep people active, or help residents learn skills and build leadership. Activities previously funded through the Community Recreation (CR) and Community Festivals (CFSE) grant programs are eligible for funding.

One-time funding of \$5,000 to \$10,000 is available for activities beginning in November, 2017 and ending in October, 2018. Groups with less than \$500,000 in annual operating budgets are prioritized for funding.

Community Projects Grant Goals

Community Project grants help community organizations develop a product, tool or resource to respond to a community need so that they can: increase their organization's impact by doing things better, increase community impact by working with others, or diversify who they serve and strengthen access and equity. Activities previously funded through Access, Equity and Human Rights (AEHR) and Community Safety Investment (CSI) grant programs are eligible for funding.

Project applications have to show how they help advance at least two of the City's strategic directions, benefit equity seeking groups, and propose products and tools that are grounded in the experience of residents and the creation of community knowledge and assets.

One-time funding is available for projects beginning in November, 2017. Applicants are invited to request the amount and time needed to complete the project.

Grant Process Improvements

A total of two-hundred and two (202) eligible Letters of Intent for Community Projects and Events were received by the deadline date of June 19, 2017, requesting a combined total of \$3,062,000. Five (5) information sessions and two (2) Application Clinics for were offered across the city.

Responding to recommendations from the sector, the following changes were made to strengthen grant-making processes:

Short Applications: To reduce the administrative burden of applying groups, increase access to the application process to grassroots groups, and reduce the substantial staff time required to review full proposals, staff shifted from one-stage application process (everyone submits a full application) to a shorter Letter of Intent (LOI) submission.

All applicants went through a simple online eligibility self-assessment before moving on the LOI to ensure only eligible not-for-profit organizations spent their time filling out the LOI. The LOI is a much shorter application. Only those LOIs that best fit the funding criteria were invited to submit a full proposal which consisted of a detailed budget and work plan.

The LOI application process provided groups with a more streamlined way to request funding for their project idea by reducing the time need to fill out the application form. This three-stage process also significantly improved the response timeframe: applicants were informed of the status of their application within one-month compared to the previous average of four months. The streamlined process also doubled the approval rate of organizations that submitted full proposals: from historical averages of 15%-25% to the current 57% average.

The new process was successful in significantly increasing the number of applications submitted by grassroots groups. Of the ninety-nine (99) Community Events LOIs received by the deadline date, 85% were from groups with less than \$500,000 in operating budgets (the vast majority of which were groups with less than \$249,000 in

annual operating budgets). A similar cohort of grassroots groups (73%) applied to the more competitive Community Projects program.

Third Party Input in Decision Making: To increase transparency and accountability, staff instituted a Review Panel of internal grants staff and external divisional grants staff in the reviews of full applications for recommended funding. Next year, staff will include external community representatives on the review panel. External divisional staff will be included in the Appeals process.

Increasing Access to Grants: To ensure as many new groups as possible have access to City grants each year, a group that is successful in getting a grant in one year will not be eligible to apply for a grant in the following year.

Appeals: Appeals are available only to applicants who have been invited to the full application stage, whose proposals meet most funding criteria and are recommended by the review panel for the appeals process.

Increasing Supports & Access to Grants for Grassroots Groups

In an effort to support grass-roots and smaller organizations to be more successful in our grant programs, the following approaches were implemented:

- Shortlisted groups with less than \$500,000 in operating budgets were invited to two (2), two-hour Application Clinics to support their efforts to strengthen their full applications;
- Applications were reviewed and assessed with other similar sized organizations to increase fairness and opportunity for grant recommendations;
- Application forms were scaled to the grant requests: Community Events applications are shorter and required fewer attachments; and,
- Community Events grant applications from grassroots groups were prioritized for funding.

Grants Review Panel & Recommendations

A total of sixty-three (63) Letters of Intent were shortlisted and those applicants were invited to submit full applications. The short-listed organizations' Letter of Intent, detailed budget and work plan were reviewed and considered for funding by the Grants Review Panel.

Grant Recommendations: A total of thirty-six (36) applications that best met the grant program criteria are recommended for \$603,806 in funding by the Grant Review Panel.

Appeals Recommendations: The Panel recommends a total of ten (10) applications for the Appeals process for further clarification on their submissions: seven (7) from Community Events, and three (3) from Community Projects. The combined budget for Appeals is \$100,000. The Appeals Panel will meet on Monday, November 13, 2017.

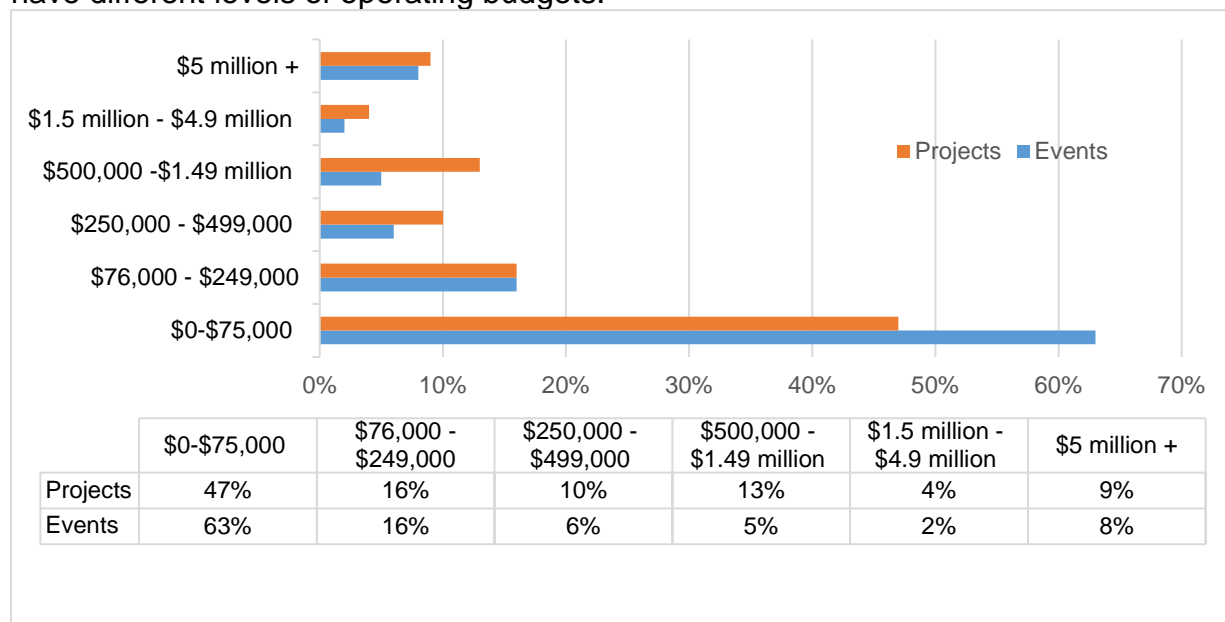
The list of projects recommended for funding are provided in Appendix A. Brief summaries of the thirty-five (35) recommended applications for funding are provided in

Appendix B, along with the list of applications recommended for Appeals. The list of declined shortlisted applicants are provided in Appendix C.

Funding Allocation Recommendation Statistics for Two Streams of Funding

	Community Events	Community Projects
\$ Combined Funding Available	\$1,000,000	
\$ Combined Amount held for Appeals	\$100,000	
# letters of intent (LOI) received	99	103
\$ requested from LOIs	508,790	\$2,552,770
# and % applications shortlisted for full proposals	36 (36%)	27 (27%)
\$ requested from shortlisted applicants	\$311,999	\$1,015,717
# applications recommended	19	17
\$ recommended for funding	\$168,386	\$435,420
\$ average grant amount	\$8,800	\$25,600
% applications recommended for funding taking place in NIAs and Emerging Neighbourhoods	79%	44%
Approval rate of full proposals	53%	61%
% total applications received from groups with less than \$500,000 in annual operating budgets	85%	73%
% grassroots organizations from shortlisted organizations recommended for funding (groups with less than \$249,000 in annual operating funding)	79%	44%

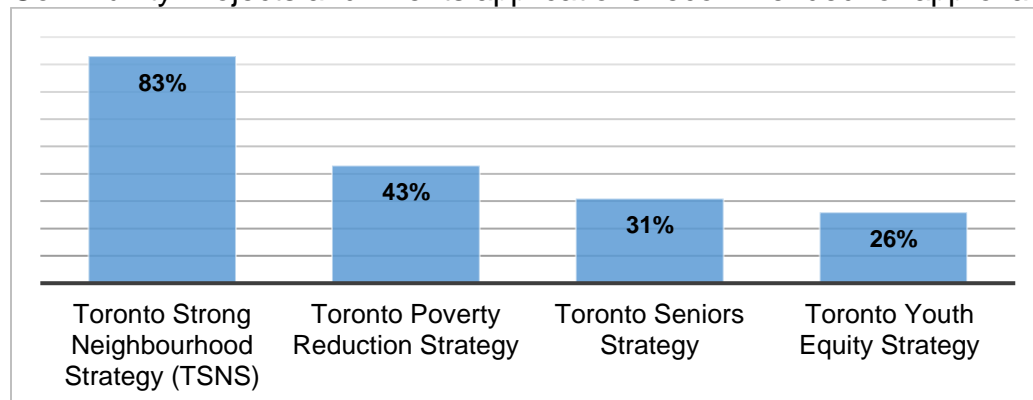
Percentage of applicant groups to Community Projects and Events grants stream that have different levels of operating budgets:



Community Impact

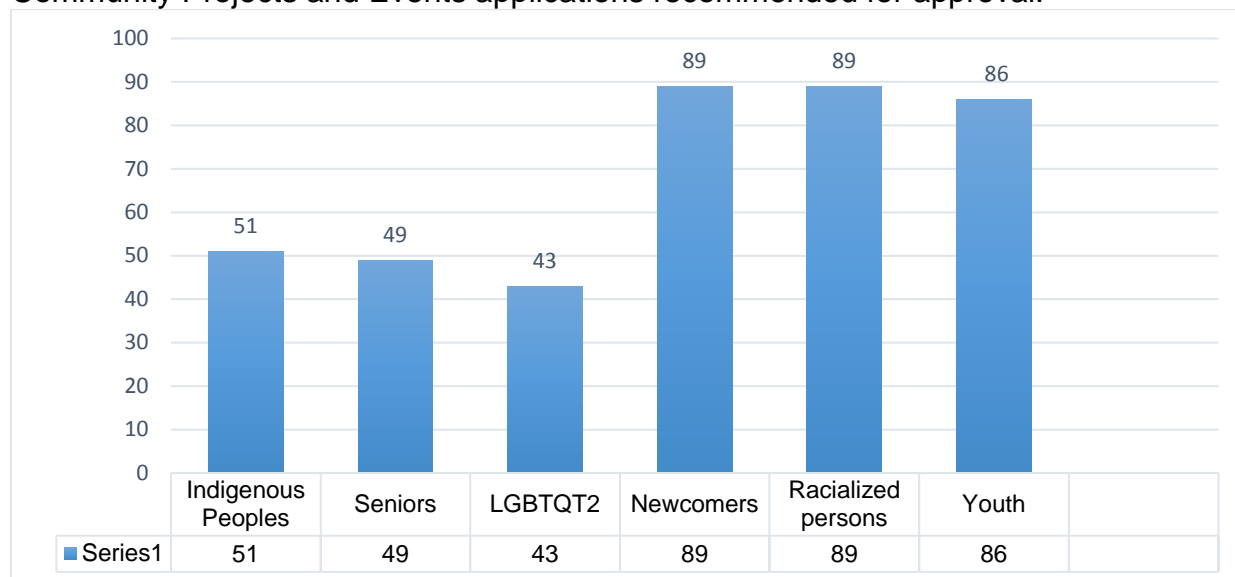
The following are some of the anticipated benefits of the 36 Projects & Events applications recommended for funding:

Below is the top four Council-approved strategies that are being advanced through the Community Projects and Events applications recommended for approval:



All recommended Projects & Events initiatives will be serving a diversity of residents from high needs communities across Toronto. A total of eleven (11) recommended Events and seven Projects (or half of the recommended initiatives) will reach out to and engage peoples from the Indigenous community.

Below are the vulnerable population groups who will be engaged through the Community Projects and Events applications recommended for approval:



- Of the 36 Community Events applications recommended, seventeen (17) will take place in Neighbourhood Improvement Areas (many serve multiple NIAs) and five (5) in Emerging Neighbourhoods. Five (5) Projects will have a city-wide focus;
- The Community Events activities will engage 7,040 residents from across Toronto in neighbourhood-based initiatives. Events vary from implementing workshops for residents to increase their skills in such areas as growing local

and fresh produce, becoming more civically engaged, creating youth-led videos on community safety, to events that bring people together through barbecues in Toronto Housing Corporation communities and 'Olympic' teams from different neighbourhoods competing in athletics;

- The Projects activities range from identifying best practices in food programming for the Indigenous communities and peer-training models for the Somali community, to increasing access to racialized and newcomer voices to the affordable childcare issues, and creating tools for service providers to better serve migrant populations; and,
- The City's investment of \$603,806 will leverage an additional \$206,000 in financial support from project partners.

2. Community Crisis Response Fund

On July, 2016 City Council approved a partnership with Toronto Community Housing (TCH) to create an Intervention Fund (rebranded to the Community Crisis Response Fund - CCRF) to provide services to communities where a violent act has taken place that has had impact on the living conditions, health or coping capacity of local residents.

The CCRF is an example of a Neighbourhood Grant. CCRF offers a one-time grant of \$3,000 for initiatives or activities that address a specific critical violent incident/crisis in a community. The funds enable communities to immediately implement their own crisis response activities to address neighbourhood violence. The purpose is to build community capacity and/or deliver community healing activity in order to improve community safety, well-being and resiliency.

Since the program launch in September, 2016 a total of thirty-eight (38) groups and \$110,942 has been invested. Funded initiatives include: counselling support, provision of safe places outside the community for healing sessions, focus groups, creation of neighbourhood crisis response teams, youth engagement programs and relationship-building activities with the Toronto Police Service.

In 2016, \$50,000 dollars from the 2016 Community Safety Investment funding program was reallocated to CCRF with net zero impact to the City. In 2017, TCH contributed \$40,000 towards the Fund.

Staff are seeing a heightened demand from the community and recommend permanently increasing the City's contribution from the Community Investment Program. For 2017, staff recommend reallocating \$60,000 for a total of \$110,000. This funding envelope will also provide grants to trustee organizations who support and mentor the grant recipients, many of which are resident-led groups.

3. Gap Funding for Local Champions Pilot

In June, 2016 City Council approved the Local Champions Pilot. A subsequent call for proposals was launched and The East Scarborough Storefront – Tides was selected in Fall, 2016 to develop and deliver a "train the trainer" capacity development certification/college credit pilot that targets residents living in the 31 Neighbourhood Improvement Areas and Emerging Neighbourhoods.

A one-year grant of \$200,000 to The East Scarborough Storefront – Tides was approved in 2016. The following Pilot deliverables have been achieved: a feasibility study; creation of a new made-in-Toronto curriculum; implementation of an 8 to 10 week training and neighbourhood identified action. An evaluation framework has been developed to determine the best model to implement over the lifetime of TSNS 2020 and partnerships with educational institutions.

Ongoing project oversight and preliminary results from the Pilot is overwhelmingly positive. Staff recommend an allocation of \$16,670 from the Community Investment Fund to the Local Champions Pilot to continue to the end of the year and realign future funding terms to correspond with the calendar year. A staff report on the future funding of the Pilot will be presented to Council in November, 2017.

4. Resources to Support the Operations of the Rexdale Hub

In 2007, the City and United Way Toronto York Region partnered on the development of a multi-service hub at 21 Panorama Court located in North Etobicoke in Ward 1. The City capital contribution of \$4.79 million and an additional \$8.9 million was leveraged from the United Way, Provincial and Federal Governments. This investment funded the state of good repair and other critical capital needs to transform a 1970s school into an updated, customized community hub.

The Hub's increasing operating costs result in fiscal pressures on tenants to rely on program dollars to cover core administrative costs. This further challenges organizations to sustain programs where efforts are focused on facility management. On October 2, 2017 City Council directed the Executive Director, Social Development Finance and Administration to identify required resources. To respond to the concerns raised in the staff report, an allocation in 2017 of \$155,000 is recommended to support the operations of the Hub.

5. Supporting the Indigenous Community to Meaningfully Engage with the City

Resources are required for the City to effectively engage with the Indigenous Communities across Toronto. Increasingly City divisions are reaching out to engage the Indigenous Communities in the development of programs and services to more effectively meet the needs of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people. Having an engagement and service planning resource embedded within the Indigenous communities would be of considerable value to the City's ongoing engagement initiatives.

Toronto Aboriginal Support Services Council (TASSC), works with member organizations in leading community-based research, policy development, and advocacy to enhance the well-being of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people living in the GTA. One of TASSC's strategic directions is to build the capacity of their 13 member organizations (local Indigenous support services) and to work as an Indigenous planning table to support guide and enable the City's work with the Indigenous Communities.

Staff are recommending a grant of \$50,000 to TASSC to provide engagement and service planning with the Indigenous Communities in support of the City's Statement of Commitment to Aboriginal Communities in Toronto (2010) and the Urban Aboriginal Framework (2012). Discussions are underway with other City divisions to augment this support.

6. List of Reallocations and Grant Recipients Approved with Delegated Authority

To ensure all grant funds are expended during the year to maximize benefit to the community, City Council approved delegated authority to allow the Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration to a) approve Crisis Response Fund grant recipients to ensure timely response to trauma in the neighbourhood, b) reallocate unused funds during the funding period to organizations that can implement the approved project, or to reallocate to applicants that were rated as high priority but not funded due to budget constraints, c) to approve recipients of Neighbourhood Grants, and, d) new initiatives approved by Council.

The Neighbourhood Micro Grant is one of the three new grant streams approved by Council and introduced this year. The first phase of the grants were selected by a group of residents and approved for \$1,000 through delegated authority to facilitate quick release of funds.

A total of fifty-one (51) resident-led groups from NIAs and Emerging Neighbourhoods were provided with funds and skills building supports by a non-profit capacity building partner. The second phase was launched in October. Continuous feedback and input from residents is helping to strengthen the process and increase awareness. For many resident-led groups, these are first-time grants and the first time they are partnering with the City.

Highlights of the grant program include feedback on the following strengths and challenges: simplified application form; stronger ties with Neighbourhood Action Tables; need for a range of grant amounts and longer time periods to complete activities; need for more capacity building supports, training and workshops for funded groups; and, need for greater understanding of the City's permit process and fees.

Appendix D provides the list of Neighbourhood Grants along with others approved through delegated authority.

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SIGNATURE

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ATTACHMENTS

- Appendix A: 2017 Allocation Recommendations – Projects and Events
- Appendix B: 2017 Projects and Events - Summary of Shortlisted Applications Recommended for Funding & List of Applications Recommended for Appeals
- Appendix C: 2017 List of Shortlisted Applications Declined for Projects and Events Funding
- Appendix D: 2017 List of Reallocations and Grant Recipients Approved with Delegated Authority