

## **2017 Allocations Recommendations for Local Champions and Organizational Mentor Pilot Programs**

**Date:** November 6, 2017

**To:** Community Development and Recreation Committee

**From:** Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration

**Wards:** All

### **SUMMARY**

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In March 2017, City Council approved three new grant programs: Community Projects & Events grants, Neighbourhood Grants, and Capacity Building grants. This report highlights the preliminary results from the Capacity Building pilot programs, and the staff recommendation for continued funding that will benefit resident leaders and grass roots youth-led groups from vulnerable and underserved communities. Results from community sector consultations will inform a comprehensive funding model for the Capacity Building stream that will be brought forward for Council approval in the first quarter of 2018.

Local Champions Pilot program was approved in 2016 for a \$200,000 grant to pilot a certificate/college credit training program for residents from Neighbourhood Improvement Areas (NIAs) to advance Council approved Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy 2020 (TSNS 2020) and the Toronto Poverty Reduction Strategy. The Organizational Mentors Pilot program was approved in 2016 for a \$150,000 grant to pilot and evaluate a funding model to deliver capacity building supports for City-funded grassroots groups, specifically to youth-led projects funded through the Identify 'N Impact (INI) grant program.

To date the Local Champions Pilot program created a made-in-Toronto training curriculum based on a successful model from Hamilton, established partnerships with post-secondary institutions, and trained and recruited twenty-two (22) community leaders who have received sixty-five (65) hours of training and subsequently hosted twenty-one (21) events reaching more than seven hundred (700) residents. Before the end of the year twenty (20) local champions will be certified as Community Facilitators.

Preliminary results from the Organizational Mentor program show that all INI grant recipients are well positioned to successfully complete their funded projects as envisioned. Furthermore, over 20 youth leaders have received over 100 one-on-one supports and are likely to feel more supported, and more confident in their ability to successfully participate in a community based group when given a supportive environment where young people can engage on a common issue with their peers.

This report recommends the following 2017 allocations from the Community Investment Fund within the Capacity Building funding stream that will augment a multi-pronged approach currently under development:

- \$175,000 allocation to the Local Champions Pilot program. Local Champions is specifically designed for residents from Neighbourhood Improvement Areas and Emerging Neighbourhoods to advance the Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy 2020 and the Toronto Poverty Reduction Strategy; with this program participants will receive a certificate/college credit. Staff recommends for the program to continue beyond the pilot phase for an additional four (4) years.
- \$125,000 allocation to the Organizational Mentor Pilot program. The program builds and sustains youth leadership through comprehensive organizational mentorship, and supports grassroots groups by offering capacity building training. Staff recommends funding the program for four (4) years, with the next year devoted to exploring resources needed to ensure an effective organizational mentorship model for City's funded grassroots youth groups.

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**

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

1. City Council approve allocations for the following Community Investment Funding program, as recommended in Appendix A, from the 2017 Approved Operating Budget for Social Development, Finance and Administration:
  - a) Total funding of \$175,000 in 2017 to a not-for-profit organization for the Local Champions program;
  - b) Total funding of \$125,000 to a not-for-profit community organization for the Organizational Mentor program;
2. City Council approve the Local Champions program to continue for an additional four (4) years within the Capacity Building grant stream, subject to the approved budget for Social Development, Finance and Administration;
3. City Council authorize the Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration to allocate 2017 Capacity Building grants to eligible community organizations for the Local Champions and Organizational Mentor programs;
4. City Council request the Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration to report back to the Community Development and Recreation Committee on selected recipients of the Local Champions and Organizational Mentor programs as part of the 2018 grants allocation recommendations report.

## **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

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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 \$300,000.00.

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

## **DECISION HISTORY**

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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 June 7, 2016 City Council adopted the recommendation to i) to pilot a certificate/college credit training program for residents from Neighbourhood Improvement Areas to advance the City Council approved Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy 2020 and the Toronto Poverty Reduction Strategy through a Local Champions Pilot; and ii.) to pilot and evaluate a funding model for capacity-building supports (organizational mentors) to City-funded emerging/grassroots groups. <http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2016.CD12.4>

## **COMMENTS**

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A comprehensive review of five (5) Community Investment Fund grant programs, in consultation with the not-for-profit sector, was conducted over 2016/17. The resulting grant framework aims to better support new and emerging groups, enhance sector resilience, encourage resident engagement and leadership development, and advance Council-approved social development strategies. City Council approved three new grant programs to advance these goals: Community Projects & Events grants, Neighbourhood Grants, and Capacity Building grants.

In June, 2016 City Council approved two pilot grant programs:

- Local Champions Pilot – Advancing Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy 2020 (TSNS 2020): to pilot a certificate/college credit training program for residents from Neighbourhood Improvement Areas (NIAs) to advance Council approved TSNS 2020 and the Toronto Poverty Reduction Strategy; and,
- Organizational Mentors Pilot – Supporting Grassroots Groups: pilot and evaluate a funding model to deliver capacity building supports for City-funded grassroots groups, specifically to youth-led projects funded through the Identify 'N Impact (INI) grant program.

Capacity Building grants include the Local Champions and Organizational Mentor pilot programs. These programs are a response to the Council directive to support more grassroots groups and a resilient sector. A comprehensive funding model for the Capacity Building grant stream, informed by community consultation results, will be brought forward for Council approval in the first quarter of 2018.

This report highlights the preliminary results from the Capacity Building pilot programs, and the staff recommendation for continued funding that will benefit resident leaders and grass roots youth-led groups from vulnerable and underserved communities.

## **1. Local Champions Program Pilot**

One of the focus of Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy 2020 is resident engagement. The need for a sustainable, capacity development model for local residents that involve ongoing opportunities for participation, development of an alumni network and employment opportunities has been identified by community partners and City staff.

In June, 2016 City Council approved a grant program to pilot a certificate training program for residents from NIAs to advance Council approved TSNS 2020 and the Toronto Poverty Reduction strategy. Total grant of \$200,000 to the East Scarborough Storefront - Tides in fall 2016 enabled the one-time adaptation and development of a customized made-in-Toronto program and curriculum, and the implementation and evaluation of the pilot in 2016-2017.

Local Champions program mission includes:

- Supporting residents to play meaningful community/city building roles,
- Providing opportunities for residents to influence community based learning, generation of ideas and decision making processes,
- Helping residents to access information, tools and people, and
- Promoting recognition of residents as key players in strengthening our communities.

### **Preliminary Results**

The results of the pilot demonstrates that the program supports local planning tables across the City of Toronto by resourcing local actions and supporting residents to leverage their experiences to pursue their aspirations which include employment, board appointments and/or professional certification in a range of areas.

A total of twenty-two (22) resident leaders have been recruited from across the Neighbourhood Improvement Areas (NIAs) emerging neighbourhoods and twelve (12) have already completed the full core training. Core training included: forty-nine (49) hours on topics such as: group facilitation, public speaking and media training, fundraising and proposal writing, community organizing and recruitment.

Local Champions are residents who have demonstrated commitment to building their neighbourhoods and to sharing resources and ideas across neighbourhoods. They aspire to deepen their individual impact through community sector employment, contract work, social enterprise and community-based organizing. So far, twenty-one (21)

community events hosted by Local Champions have reached approximately seven hundred (700) residents across NIAs. One Local Champion was the recipient of this year's Mayor's Safety Award, and three Local Champions have already benefitted from training and secured employment contracts. Local Champions will also share their work in November at a conference for Ontario not-for-profit organizations and sector leaders.

Partnership with a local post-secondary institution is currently being formalized. Under this partnership, Local Champions will be assessed and can receive four (4) Community Worker credits for their prior learning and/or experience that will be applicable towards a fast tracked Community Worker program at the institution. The post-secondary institution will also deliver a Human Rights course that will count towards a course credit and a completion certificate. Another post-secondary institution partnership is currently under development.

Over the fall 2017, up to twenty (20) Local Champions and twenty (20) potential Local Champion resident leaders will be certified as community facilitators with a potential for future contracts as professional local facilitators. Discussions are underway with the Planning Division to engage Local Champions in co-delivering their civic engagement training to residents.

The potential for the program to continue to build a stable pipeline of resident experts in community engagement and leadership across the Neighbourhood Improvement Areas is great. The development of resident's skills, confidence and networks enhances their employment prospects, their ability to pursue academic goals, and supports the Poverty Strategy goals.

Staff recommends a grant of \$175,000 in 2017 to continue to build the momentum of the program. Staff also recommend the Local Champions program to continue beyond its pilot phase to four (4) more years.

## **2. Organizational Mentor Program Pilot**

In 2015, City Council directed SDFA to look for ways to increase supports to new and emerging groups.

City funded grassroots groups are required to find a qualified trustee organization with strong financial management and administrative policies, procedures and oversight, and audited financial statements to receive the grant. In many cases, the City's Identify 'N Impact grants to youth-led groups are the first grants they ever receive and sourcing a trustee proves difficult and takes many months. In addition, some trustee relationships are transactional in nature, while others provide capacity building supports to group leaders. These supports are provided with varying degrees of success, as very few organizations in Toronto are funded directly to do this critical work. Recent research into this field of work in Ontario<sup>1,2</sup> and Toronto<sup>3</sup> notes these trends and offers recommendations on best practices and funding.

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1 Sector Signal: A Platform for Change, Mowat NFP, September 2013

2 Shared Platform Guidebook, Ontario Nonprofit Network, 2016

3 <http://laidlawfdn.org/news/post/shared-platforms-research-update/>

The City has a keen interest in learning what successful trusteeship looks like, and what markers of success are. The City has an existing patchwork approach with various types of trustee models. The City's history of providing capacity-building supports for applying and funded grassroots groups has demonstrated that it is resource- and time-intensive. The City, through Council direction is increasing funding to grassroots groups: from 33% of all groups funded through Community Investment Funding in 2015 to 62% in just one grant program in 2017. There is a need to build a community infrastructure of strong organizational mentors (trustees or shared platforms) for emerging/grass-roots groups before increasing numbers of these groups that are funded by the City.

Through the pilot program, City sought to better understand the critical factors and resources needed for organizations to be effective mentors, which then allows for youth-led groups to be successful and have stronger impact in the community, and build their leadership capacity. The need for a sustainable capacity development and mentorship model for youth-led groups and other grassroots groups has been identified by community partners and City staff. In June, 2016 City Council approved \$150,000 for the Organizational Mentor program to evaluate and pilot organizational mentor funding model for City-funded grassroots groups, specifically to youth-led projects funded through the Identify 'N Impact (INI) grant program, to ensure their successful implementation.

Through a competitive call for proposal process, the City provided funding to Youth Action Network to deliver trusteeing and mentoring services to ten (10) grant recipients of the City's Identify 'N Impact (INI) youth-led groups. The ten (10) INI groups were also provided with supports to ensure the group leaders and members had the supports they needed to be successful in delivering the funded projects. Since January, twenty (20) youth leaders were provided with supports through 107 one-on-one meetings, phone and by email conversations.

The Organizational Mentor provided supports to diverse INI projects that work with vulnerable and MVP youth (those who are vulnerable to violence crime). Projects ranged from creating a closer relationship with the police through facilitated workshops, to initiative to increase exposure to science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM), to using technology to launch a digital arts museum on Toronto Black history.

The INI groups also had free access to meeting and programming space, which is seen as a critical barrier to successful project implementation. A key indicator of success is the implementation of the City funded projects. All INI grant recipients are on track to complete their funding projects on time unlike previous years where INI funded groups were more likely to request extensions to their grant term to complete their grant deliverables.

## **Preliminary Results**

Preliminary results from the pilot program evaluation provide the following learnings:

- Dedicated staff is critical to the successful completion of City-funded INI projects by providing ongoing supports, coaching, referrals and oversight.

- Youth are likely to feel more supported, and more confident in their ability to successfully participate in a community based group when given a supportive environment where young people can engage on a common issue with their peers.
- Majority (61%) of youth from City funded INI groups said that they were more confident in delivering their project idea because of the support of their organizational mentor.
- Training and workshops increased gains in skills like communication (80%), self-confidence (63%), continuously listening and engaging with peers and other young people (61%).

City staff recommend the continuation of the Organizational Mentor program for an additional four years with a grant of \$125,000 in 2017 to a not-for-profit organization. Staff recommends the next year be devoted to exploring resources needed to ensure an effective organizational mentorship model for City's funded youth-led groups and appropriate resourcing for future years.

The further development and learning from this program will inform and augment a multipronged approach currently under development for the newly-approved Capacity Building grant stream for grassroots and established groups.

## **CONTACT**

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## **SIGNATURE**

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