



REPORT FOR ACTION

Investing in Community Based Anti-violence Programs

Date: September 27, 2019

To: Toronto City Council

From: Executive Director, Social Development Finance and Administration

Wards: All

SUMMARY

In 2018, City Council authorized staff to apply for \$32.6 million Federal Government funding for ongoing investments in community violence intervention and prevention programming. In January 2019, the Federal government confirmed \$6.8 million in funding over 5-years for the Community Healing Project but five applications totalling \$26.2 million were not funded. The lack of investment in the remaining funding priorities submitted to the Federal Government continue to negatively impact the City's ability to mobilize prevention, intervention and risk mitigation strategies aimed at the roots of poverty and violence.

At the September 18, 2019 Executive Committee the Executive Director of Social Development was requested to review the outstanding grant requests to the National Crime Prevention Strategy Fund, and determine which initiative will make the most meaningful impact to reduce gun violence and the City's long-term Community Safety and Wellbeing Plan, and report directly to City Council at its meeting on October 2 and 3, 2019.

International best practices identify that it is critical to balancing reactive investments in criminal justice responses with meaningful and sustained investment in upstream violence prevention. Investments targeted at multi-sectoral approaches leveraging city, health, community and policing expertise, combined with the lived experience of affected communities can provide the most effective results in risk mitigation, prevention and ongoing social development.

As a result, staff are recommending the TO WARDS Peace program as priority for implementation. The TO WARDS Peace program will increase effective interventions to mitigate violence through an inter-sectoral approach. This report outlines components of the model, including:

- Leveraging City, health and community interventions to address youth violence and support families

- Investing in community based organizations and those with lived experience
- Aligning with existing intervention models
- Developing a robust communication plan and media campaign that enhances the city's ability to mobilize web-based community engagement and violence interruption
- Enhancing capacity of the Community Crisis Response Program to respond to increased incidents of violence in the community
- Advancing Community Safety and Wellbeing Goals of the City

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. City Council direct the Executive Director of Social Development to submit a business case for consideration during the 2020 budget process to fund the implementation of TO WARDS Peace program.
2. City Council request that the Government of Canada invest the outstanding \$26.2 million over five years in funding proposals under the National Crime Prevention Strategy submitted by the City of Toronto
3. City Council authorize the Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration to apply for, enter into any necessary agreements, receive and allocate money received from other funders in support of TO WARDS Peace

FINANCIAL IMPACT

It is estimated that the TO WARDS Peace program will require \$1.5 million in annual funding to support violence mitigation through this inter-sectoral model. Full year cost estimates will fund staffing (4 FTE salaries at \$0.443 million) and \$1.057 million in community investments.

This program is not currently funded in the 2019 Operating Budget and any approval in principle will also require funding approval through the 2020 budget process.

TO WARDS Peace Program costs will be included in the 2020 operating budget submission for consideration against other City priorities and evaluated with all new and enhanced requests with identification of a sustainable funding source required.

The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer has been provided the financial impacts associated with this program for review as part of the 2020 budget process.

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting on September 18, 2019, Executive Committee requested the Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration to review the outstanding funding proposals under the National Crime Prevention Strategy Fund and determine which initiative will make the most meaningful impact to reduce gun violence and the City's long-term Community Safety and Wellbeing Plan, and report directly to City Council at its meeting on October 2 and 3, 2019.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2019.EX8.26>

At its September 6, 2019 meeting, Budget Committee recommended that:

4. City Council, in light of the recent spate of gun violence, request the Federal Government to reconsider City Council's request in Item 2018.CC44.14 "Immediate Steps to Address Gun Violence" to fund the unfunded applications under the National Crime Prevention Strategy, totalling \$26.2 million over the next 5 years, and City Council request the City Clerk to forward this request to all Toronto Members of Parliament. <http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2019.BU8.10>

At its July 23, 2018 meeting, City council adopted 36 recommendations on Immediate Steps to Address Gun Violence.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2018.CC44.14>

COMMENTS

TO WARDS Peace Intervention Model

TO WARDS Peace is a wraparound model that combines credible community members with lived experience of involvement in violence with integrated City, health and community staff teams aimed at violence prevention and interruption. This model leverages the lived experience of affected communities to develop and implement effective community engagement approaches, innovative communication tools, social media strategies and targeted investment geared at violence prevention and interruption.

The model utilizes an inter-sectoral approach, aligned with the development of the Community Safety and Well-being Plan. Currently, program data is collected on community safety and acute elevated risks factors through existing City programs such as FOCUS Toronto and the Community Crisis Response Program. Community safety and wellbeing risk factors consistently identified by integrated service models include mental health, social isolation, poverty, unsafe or unstable housing. TO WARDS Peace aligns with existing programs to amplify effective interventions.

The integrated intervention teams will consist of City staff, health practitioners, resourced community organizations and residents utilizing risk driven data, social media, local community expertise and resident relationships to engage those vulnerable to involvement in violence and crime. This intervention, targets the de-escalation of emerging and retaliatory conflicts. The integrated team fosters the engagement of families and communities to identify and respond to individual/community acute risk factors that precipitate and contribute to involvement in serious violence and crime.

Community Investment

Finding solutions to address gun violence requires the expertise of a wide variety of community stakeholders in the design and implementation of intervention strategies. To reduce violence City Divisions, Toronto Police Service and community stakeholders require ongoing collaboration and significant sector investment.

TO WARDS Peace ensures that City and its partners can invest in community to leverage local experience and build capacity to address violence in neighbourhoods. The implementation model will provide immediate investment in community based organizations and grassroots groups through existing Rapid Response Youth Gun Violence Grants. The investments will be targeted to local risk mitigation approaches including violence prevention/interruption. Current investment structures at the City will support the alignment and integration of service delivery, and build the capacity of community based organizations to utilize existing local tools such as FOCUS Toronto situation tables.

The TO WARDS Peace model requires \$1.5 Million annually in base funding. This would consist of investments of \$.443M in staffing for 4 FTE salaries to operate the program and \$1.057M in community investments.

This investment will also enhance the City's ability to deliver a made-for-Toronto model for violence interruption that involves credible community members with past lived experience of involvement in violence to serve as positive role models for youth, providing culturally-relevant mediation and mentorship. In addition, community members will also work with integrated staff teams funded through the model to better support the needs of individuals and families.

Alignment

The integrated approach of TO WARDS Peace directly aligns with existing intervention models and enhances collaboration. The following intervention models have direct compatibility:

Program	Alignment with TO WARDS Peace Model
Confronting Anti-Black Racism Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community violence is a health equity issue as injuries and homicides disproportionately affect the lives of Black residents and areas of the city that face socioeconomic disadvantage. The Confronting Anti-Black Racism Office will provide training and mentorship of mentors and intervention teams.
Community Crisis Response Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Crisis Response Program Data will be utilized to support the identification of areas with higher levels of community violence. Community Crisis Response Program Networks and partnerships can be leveraged to support the implementation of TO WARDS Peace.
FOCUS Toronto	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5 Situation tables consisting of 120 service providers will be utilized as a mechanism for violence intervention/interruption by the TO WARDS Peace team and funded partners. FOCUS Toronto data can be utilized to identify priorities for TO WARDS Peace.
Toronto Police Service Integrated Gun and Gang Taskforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Toronto Police Service has identified gang risk factors that impact individuals and community that the TO WARDS Peace model can prioritize. Referral processes from the Taskforce to TO WARDS Peace will be explored and identified.
Community Healing Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Healing project is training young people in community who are becoming community facilitators.
Justice Centre – North West	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Ministry of Attorney General is currently developing a Justice Centre Pilot in North West Toronto that is part of the Ontario Guns Gangs and Violence Reduction Strategy. TO WARDS Peace will align with the Toronto Pilot implementations.

Communication

TO Wards Peace will create an outreach campaign to popularize the message of peaceful communities and foster engagement, capacity building, targeted investments and access to relevant programs.

Social media is an underutilized platform for engagement and violence interruption. TO WARDS Peace will explore social media platforms/tactics to engage young people and

better understand the propensity for violence. The program will rely on social analytics to best utilize the platform. Additionally, the program will research and implement best practices for social media interventions and establish a youth-engaged working group for online content development focused on preventing violence.

Ongoing Monitoring and Evaluation

An outcomes framework will be designed and implemented to articulate the effectiveness of the interventions, opportunities to modify the model and ensure that TO WARDS Peace advances broader Community Safety and Wellbeing goals.

The Province of Ontario mandated municipalities to develop Community Safety and Wellbeing Plans as part of the Community Safety and Policing Act. Although the City's efforts are in the initial stages, the TO WARDS Peace model is aligned with the four planning pillars of the Community Safety and Wellbeing Framework: Incident Response, Risk Mitigation, Prevention and Social Development. The Community Safety and Wellbeing Plan will be considered by Council in the fall of 2020.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

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ATTACHMENTS
