



## 2020 Student Nutrition Program Service Subsidies

**Date:** May 29, 2020

**To:** Board of Health

**From:** Medical Officer of Health

**Wards:** All

### SUMMARY

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This report outlines recommendations for the 2020 Student Nutrition Program service subsidy allocations. The proposed combined allocations to the Angel Foundation for Learning (AFL) and the Toronto Foundation for Student Success (TFSS) total \$16,029,626 which includes \$266,000 held in reserve for appeals/late applications.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

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The Medical Officer of Health recommends that:

1. City Council authorize the Medical Officer of Health to enter into agreements totalling \$16,029,626 with the Angel Foundation for Learning (\$4,352,722) and the Toronto Foundation for Student Success (\$11,676,904) to administer the 2020 approved municipal funding to eligible student nutrition programs across the City of Toronto.
2. City Council authorize the Medical Officer of Health to take the necessary actions to give effect to Recommendation 1 above, including the execution of legal agreements with the Angel Foundation for Learning and the Toronto Foundation for Student Success, on behalf of the City of Toronto.
3. The Board of Health and City Council request the Provincial Government to increase its grant funding investment proportionally to match the increased City of Toronto investment.
4. The Board of Health and City Council request the Federal Government to provide core funding for a national school food program.
5. The Board of Health forward this report to the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services, the Minister of Health, the Minister of Education, the Toronto District School Board, the Toronto Catholic District School Board, le Conseil scolaire Viamonde,

le Conseil scolaire catholique MonAvenir, the Angel Foundation for Learning, the Toronto Foundation for Student Success, and FoodShare Toronto.

## **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

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The 2020 Approved Operating Budget for Toronto Public Health includes funding of \$16,059,626 gross and net for municipally-funded student nutrition programs as follows:

1. \$15,759,626 toward the cost of nutritious food for eligible existing programs at 618 school communities across the City of Toronto. Funding will help existing programs maintain their funding level amid program growth from increased student participation levels and the increased cost of food.
2. \$300,000 toward the cost of nutritious food, capacity building and assessment for eligible independent schools at six school communities across the City of Toronto. This funding is allocated as follows: \$230,000 toward the cost of nutritious food; \$40,000 to support program success through capacity building of expansion sites and oversight of municipal grants; and \$30,000 to support the assessment of eligibility of interested independent schools.

This report recommends an allocation of \$16,029,626: \$4,352,722 to the Angel Foundation for Learning and \$11,676,904 to the Toronto Foundation for Student Success, which includes all funds held in reserve as outlined in Tables 1 and 2.

There is no financial impact associated with this report beyond what has already been approved in the 2020 Operating Budget for Toronto Public Health.

## **DECISION HISTORY**

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At its meeting held on February 19, 2020, City Council approved 2020 municipal funding for student nutrition programs of \$16,059,626.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2020.EX13.2>

## **COMMENTS**

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### **Community Partnership Model Supports for Student Nutrition Program**

Student Nutrition Ontario-Toronto (SNO-Toronto) recommends the allocation of municipal and provincial funding to Toronto's student nutrition programs, provides program support and monitors program quality and accountability. SNO-Toronto is made up of a committee and two sub-committees, including an Allocations Sub-Committee. The SNO-Toronto Committee is comprised of student nutrition stakeholders, including representatives from Toronto Public Health (TPH), Toronto District School Board (TDSB), Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB), AFL, TFSS, FoodShare Toronto, and two community representatives. Standardized meal costs per student are used to estimate program costs and are adjusted annually for food

inflation, when applicable.

### **Annual Review of Applications**

The joint application process for municipal and provincial student nutrition program grants began in December 2019, when all currently funded student nutrition programs in Toronto were notified of the grant opportunity. Staff from each SNO-Toronto partner agency, except for Toronto Public Health, provide individual program sites with assistance to complete grant applications.

Annually, applications are reviewed by a panel of staff from Toronto Public Health, the TDSB, the TCDSB and SNO-Toronto community development staff, using standardized review procedures and following conflict of interest guidelines. Applications recommended for funding are forwarded to the SNO-Toronto Committee for approval. The process satisfies the requirements laid out in the revised *City of Toronto Community Grants Policy*, approved by City Council on July 16, 2019 <http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2019.EC6.19> .

### **Year-round Accountability for Student Nutrition Program Grants**

The charitable foundations which administer the municipal grant to student nutrition programs in Toronto, TFSS and AFL, enter into legal agreements with the City of Toronto in advance of receiving municipal funds. Legal agreements include a requirement that each foundation provide the City with consolidated financial reports detailing its administration of municipal funds to student nutrition programs, with associated performance measures, twice a year, as well as annual audited financial statements. On a monthly basis, the foundations also collect detailed reports from individual student nutrition programs receiving municipal grants. Both foundations consistently meet all of their contractual requirements.

### **Summary of Allocations and Recommendations**

The SNO-Toronto committee received and approved the following recommendations for the distribution of municipal funds for existing programs as outlined in Tables 1 and 2.

*Table 1 - Summary of Allocations and Recommendations: Existing Programs*

<b>Foundation</b>	<b>Funding Amount</b>
Angel Foundation for Learning (167 school communities)	\$ 4,352,722
Toronto Foundation for Student Success (451 school communities)	\$11,306,904
Toronto Foundation for Student Success (held in reserve for late applications and appeals)	\$ 100,000
<b>Total</b> (618 school communities reaching 213,637 participants)	<b>\$15,759,626</b>

The money held in reserve for appeals and late applications will be used to make

adjustments to the allocations as required prior to December 31, 2020. The entire municipal grant for existing programs is distributed to programs and directed towards the cost of nutritious food.

*Table 2 - Summary of Allocations and Recommendations: Independent School Expansion*

<b>Foundation</b>	<b>Funding Amount</b>
Toronto Foundation for Student Success (6 independent schools reaching 949 participants)	\$ 64,000
Toronto Foundation for Student Success (held in reserve for late applications and appeals)	\$166,000
Toronto Foundation for Student Success (for community capacity building)	\$ 40,000
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>\$270,000</b>
Administered by TPH to support the assessment process	\$ 30,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$300,000</b>

The municipal expansion for independent schools continues through to December 31, 2020, when the money held in reserve for appeals and late applications will be used to make adjustments to the allocations as required. The municipal grant, except for the portion allocated to community capacity building and assessment, is distributed to programs and directed towards the cost of nutritious food. The funds for community capacity building will be allocated to align with the current capacity and program coordination model used by the SNO-Toronto partnership with a focus on supporting the start-up needs of new programs in independent schools.

All student nutrition programs approved for funding will receive municipal funding in three instalments. They must meet program requirements, including monthly financial reporting to their respective Foundation, to receive subsequent instalment cheques.

### **Use of Municipal Budget Enhancement for 2020**

The 2020 allocation of the municipal investment continues to support the vision endorsed by the City in 2012 to strengthen and grow student nutrition programs in Toronto, by:

- Focusing investment on breakfast/morning meal programs;
- Strengthening existing programs; and
- Strengthening the partnership funding model.

For the Toronto Public Health 2020 Operating Budget, City Council approved an increase of \$1,099,509 to total \$16,059,626 for student nutrition programs. This funding aligns with the 2020/21 school year. The enhanced funding will help existing programs offset the increased cost of food and maintain their municipal funding level at 19.0

percent of total program costs.

Also, \$300,000 of the base 2020 municipal funding will support the expansion of student nutrition programs to eligible independent schools which meet needs-based eligibility criteria, an initiative that began in 2019 and continues in 2020. Combined across 2019 and 2020, 45 independent schools expressed interest in offering a new student nutrition program. Of those, 23 schools met the initial screening assessment criteria and submitted student postal codes for further needs assessment analysis. In total, 9 schools met needs-based eligibility criteria, while 6 submitted a grant application and were funded for the first time to provide a student nutrition program reaching 949 students. The grant appeals and late application process concluding December 31, 2020 may change these numbers.

### **Impact of COVID-19 on Student Nutrition Programs**

On March 13, 2020, the Province of Ontario closed all publicly funded schools across the province as part of their efforts to manage the spread of COVID-19. On May 19, the Province announced that schools would remain closed for the remainder of the 2019/20 school year. While schools are closed, thousands of the City's most vulnerable children and youth no longer receive a daily nutritious meal through their student nutrition program. To help bridge this gap, during the COVID-19 pandemic the City of Toronto is working with student nutrition program partners to support the Food for Kids program. Food for Kids distributes grocery food gift cards to families in need who have children who attend schools with student nutrition programs. The \$50 grocery food gift card represents the value of about 30 breakfasts had the student received a meal at their school. The City's contribution towards Food for Kids comes from the 2019 municipal student nutrition program funds that had not been distributed to schools at the time of the initial closure on March 13, 2020.

Toronto Public Health anticipates that COVID-19 will impact how student nutrition programs operate in the 2020/21 school year. More information is expected to come in the following months from the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services. Toronto Public Health, together with Student Nutrition Ontario – Toronto, is monitoring the situation and is committed to supporting the safe operation of student nutrition programs.

### **Provincial Funding**

The TFSS is the Lead Agency for the Ontario Student Nutrition Program funded by the Ontario Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services and is accountable to ensure provincial program criteria is met. The TFSS subcontracts with the AFL to administer the provincial funding for programs located in TCDSB sites and support program-level community development. In addition, the TFSS subcontracts with FoodShare Toronto to support program-level community development. Programs will receive their provincial funding at the same time as their municipal funding.

The 2020 provincial investment for Toronto's student nutrition programs has not been confirmed to date. However, it is not expected to be greater than the current base funding for 2019. In 2019/20, the Government of Ontario's investment in Toronto's student nutrition programs was as follows (Table 3):

Table 3 - Summary of 2019 Provincial Funding Investment

<b>Funding Use</b>	<b>Funding Amount</b>
Base funding for new and existing programs towards food cost	\$6,340,170
Community development and administration funding	\$2,147,638
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$8,487,808</b>

**Federal support for national school food program**

Core government funding maximizes the viability of programs. The Board of Health and City Council have a long history of advocacy to the federal government for a national student nutrition program. Presently, there is no federal funding for student nutrition programs. The 2019 Federal budget outlined commitments to a Canada Food Policy, including the government's intentions to work with provinces and territories towards the creation of a National School Food Program. This work is ongoing.

**CONTACT**

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**SIGNATURE**

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Medical Officer of Health