



Investing in Youth Outcomes: A Strategic Guide for City of Toronto Youth Programs

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Investing in Youth Outcomes is a strategic approach for City of Toronto youth programs that supports positive youth development, contributes to violence prevention and fosters equity and inclusion. It is intended to be a guide for program planning, monitoring and evaluation, and decision-making.

The following document outlines the Investing in Youth Outcomes guide based on its main components:

1. Youth Outcomes Framework

- Shared outcomes to outline the individual and collective impact City of Toronto youth programs want to have on the well-being of youth in Toronto
- Performance measures to track progress towards desired outcomes. This can help facilitate clear and consistent monitoring, reporting as well as establish baselines and targets for youth services.

2. Youth Violence Prevention Spectrum

- Spectrum of youth violence prevention approaches to understand the different roles current City of Toronto youth programs play in violence prevention.
- Menu of risk factors for violence to identify youth most vulnerable to serious crime and violence and refine program reach.

3. Promising Practices to Improve Program Access

Methodology

The Youth Outcomes Framework is a product of strong interdivisional collaboration and the expert support of an external consultant. From October, 2019 to September, 2020, a team of staff from all relevant City Divisions, Agencies and Corporations worked together to identify outcomes and performance measures that apply to the City of Toronto's current portfolio of youth programs.

The Youth Outcomes Framework is informed by the most current research on positive youth development. In other words, it focuses on helping youth build on their strengths and develop the competencies, values, and connections they need to thrive in life and work. The Framework is also grounded in the Province of Ontario's [Stepping Up: A Strategic Framework to Help Ontario's Youth Succeed](#) (2016). Stepping Up incorporates the findings in the [Review of the Roots of Youth Violence](#) report (2008) and builds on the work of the [Stepping Stones: A Resource on Youth Development](#) (2012) and Ontario's [Youth Action Plan](#) (2012). These foundational policies and plans were created in broad consultation with youth, community leaders, researchers and service providers.

On November 18, 2020, staff organized an online session with the Toronto Youth Cabinet to solicit feedback from youth on a draft version of the Youth Outcomes Framework. Approximately 23 youth participated in the event and shared valuable feedback that was incorporated into the final version of the Framework.

Using the Framework

The Youth Outcomes Framework is intended to be a 'menu' of outcome areas, outcomes, and performance measures for City of Toronto youth programs. Divisions, Agencies, and Corporations select outcomes and performance measures that are relevant to their programs, and track data against these using consistent data collection tools such as pre/post survey, or retrospective, end-of-program surveys. Divisions, Agencies, and Corporations may also wish to track performance measures that are not included in the Outcomes Framework if they would like to gather further program-specific data.

¹Province of Ontario (2012). Stepping Stones: A Resource on Youth Development

Divisions, Agencies, and Corporations will also collect the following socio-demographic data from participants in City of Toronto youth programs: age, gender, postal code, language preference, Canadian born or immigrant and time of immigration, Indigenous identify, race, disability, sexual orientation, educational level and employment status. This information will be used to understand whether City programs are accessible and relevant to all youth, particularly youth that face structural inequities, and identify opportunities to remove barriers and promote equity in service delivery.

The selection of this socio-demographic information was based on the guidelines in the Data for Equity Strategy (2020). Personal information will be collected and stored in accordance with the City of Toronto's obligations under the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection Act and City of Toronto Act, 2006.

At regular intervals, Divisions, Agencies, and Corporations will use the data they have collected to:

- review whether their programs are achieving their intended outcomes,
- determine if the programs are accessible to all youth particularly those that face structural inequities due to income, gender, race, sexual orientation, disability immigration status and/or where they live in the city,
- use the information to evaluate programs and identify potential program modifications, and
- establish base line data and targets to improve service delivery.

The City of Toronto Youth Outcomes Framework is organized into three components:

- 1. Outcome Area:** broad category or theme that helps organize specific outcomes for youth participants.
- 2. Outcomes:** statement that describes the intended change or impact the City of Toronto programs will have on the youth they serve.
- 3. Performance measures:** an indicator (a percentage, ratio or proportion) for each outcome to help measure progress towards the intended outcomes.

Outcome Area	Outcomes	Performance Measures
Supportive peers and adults Youth have trusting and mutually respectful relationships with peers, adults, mentors and community members to support positive cognitive, emotional, and social development, help navigate challenges, enable access to opportunities, and provide support and care.	Toronto youth have trusting and mutually respectful relationships with peers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of youth who say they met new peers through the program they can relate to • % of youth who say they met new peers through the program who they can share their feelings, ideas, interests and opinions with, including peers who may have different life experiences from their own • % of youth who say they met new friends through the program who understand them, accept them for who they are, and encourage them to be themselves
	Toronto youth have trusting, mutually respectful, and supportive relationships with adults, mentors, and community members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of youth who say they met at least one adult (such as a mentor or program staff member) through the program that they trust and respect, and who respects them • % of youth who say they met at least one adult (such as a mentor or program staff member) through the program who can listen to and support them when they want and ask for it • % of youth who say they met at least one adult through the program who sees their potential and encourages them to do their best • % of youth who say they met at least one adult through the program who connects them with other people (including role models), resources, and opportunities based on their goals and interests • % of youth who say they have met at least one person through the program who they can relate to or whom they consider a role model

Outcome Area	Outcomes	Performance Measures
<p>Physical health and mental wellbeing</p> <p>Toronto youth have what they need to maintain good physical health and mental wellbeing.</p>	<p>Toronto youth have what they need to maintain good physical health</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % youth who say they were given the opportunity to be physically active through the program • % youth who say they are more physically active because of the program • % youth who say that they have increased knowledge regarding sexual and reproductive health compared to when they first started the program • % youth who say that they have increased knowledge regarding substance use compared to when they first started the program • % of youth who say that they are more comfortable accessing supports or services if they need help or advice about safe sexual health compared to when they first started the program • % of youth who say that they are more comfortable accessing supports or services if they need help or advice with substance use compared to when they first started the program • % of youth who say that they are more aware of where they can go to get supports or services if they need help or advice about safe sexual health or substance use compared to when they first started the program • Among youth who say that they wanted or needed support for safe sexual health or substance use: % of youth who accessed resources, supports, or services for safe sexual health or substance use • % of youth who say they make healthier (or safer) decisions in their daily lives about their sexual health or substance use compared to when they first started the program

Outcome Area	Outcomes	Performance Measures
<p>Physical health and mental wellbeing</p> <p>Toronto youth have what they need to maintain good physical health and mental wellbeing.</p>	<p>Toronto youth have what they need to maintain their mental wellbeing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of youth who say they know more about mental wellbeing compared to when they first started the program • % of youth who say they are better able to recognize when they need help with their mental wellbeing compared to when they first started the program • % of youth who say they can identify what they need to be able to cope with what is happening in their lives • % of youth who say they are more confident communicating and advocating for their needs to others, including asking for help and/or accessing supports, tools, or services if they need help with their mental wellbeing compared to when they first started the program • % of youth who say they are more confident in their ability to take care of their mental wellbeing compared to when they first started the program • % of youth who say they are more confident in their ability to manage their stress and cope when changes happen in their lives compared to when they first started the program • % of youth who say they are more aware of how to access supports or services for their mental wellbeing compared to when they first started the program • Among youth who say they wanted or needed support with their mental wellbeing: % of youth who accessed mental health or wellbeing supports or services since they started the program • % of youth who report improved mental wellbeing after taking part in the program compared to when they first started • % of youth who say they are better able to stay safe online, recognize cyberbullying and harassment, and talk to someone or get help if they need it

Outcome Area	Outcomes	Performance Measures
Life and social skills Toronto youth have the life and social skills they need to thrive, including planning and organizing, communication, team work, conflict management, problem-solving, decision-making, critical thinking, self-awareness, learning and information-seeking, and financial management skills.	Toronto youth feel they have planning and organizing skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of youth who say they are better able to make plans compared to when they first started the program • % of youth who say they are better able to stay organized compared to when they first started the program
	Toronto youth feel they have communication and creative expression skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of youth who say they are more confident talking in a group setting compared to when they first started the program • % of youth who say they are more comfortable sharing their thoughts, opinions, and feelings with adults and peers compared to when they first started the program • % of youth who say they are more confident in their written communication skills compared to when they first started the program • % of youth who say they are more creative in their ability to express their thoughts compared to when they first started the program
	Toronto youth feel they are able to work well with others and manage conflict	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of youth who say they are more confident in their ability to work with others in a team to successfully solve a problem or accomplish a task compared to when they first started the program • % of youth who say they learned strategies to help them think through how to act or what to say in a disagreement or conflict with someone compared to when they first started the program • % of youth who say they are more confident in their ability to resolve an argument or fight compared to when they first started the program
	Toronto youth feel they have problem-solving, decision-making, and critical thinking skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of youth who say they are more confident in their ability to make a plan of action and follow it when faced with a problem in their life compared to when they first started the program • % of youth who say they are more confident in their ability to identify other ways to respond to their problems if their first solutions don't work compared to when they started the program

Outcome Area	Outcomes	Performance Measures
Life and social skills Toronto youth have the life and social skills they need to thrive, including planning and organizing, communication, team work, conflict management, problem-solving, decision-making, critical thinking, self-awareness, learning and information-seeking, and financial management skills.	Toronto youth feel that they have learning and information-seeking skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of youth who say they are more confident in their ability to learn compared to when they first started the program • % of youth who say they have improved their studying skills (e.g., reading, organizing information, making connections between ideas) compared to when they first started the program • % of youth who say they have discovered a new interest or perspective as a result of participating in the program • % of youth who say they are more confident in their research and information-seeking skills
	Toronto youth feel aware of their strengths and areas for improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of youth who say they are better able to identify their strengths compared to when they started the program • % of youth who say they are better able to identify areas in which they could improve compared to when they started the program
	Toronto youth feel they have financial literacy skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # and % of youth who report they intend to implement a budget/spending plan after participating in the program • # and % of youth who report that they intend to open up or build up a savings account after participating in the program • # and % of youth who say they learned strategies to reduce and manage their debt after participating in the program • # and % of youth who say they are aware of the benefits of filing their income taxes after participating in the program

Outcome Area	Outcomes	Performance Measures
Employment and entrepreneurship Toronto youth have transferable and technical skills to create or obtain employment and advance their chosen employment path.	Toronto youth have the skills and opportunities to develop professional networks and build knowledge of a sector of interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of youth who say they know more about the sector or sectors that they are interested in (or were the focus of the program) compared to when they first started the program • % of youth who say they are connected to people who work in the sector or sectors that they are interested in (or were the focus of the program) compared to when they first started the program • % of youth who say they know more about what types of jobs are available in the sector or sectors that they are interested in (or that were the focus of the program) compared to when they first started the program • % of youth who say that they are more confident in their networking skills (e.g., reaching out to someone to learn about a sector or job, going to an in-person or online networking event) compared to when they first started the program • % of youth who say they met at least one person through the program who they can ask for career advice, career information, or job leads if they need it
	Toronto youth have employment or career goals, know the steps needed to work towards them, and feel they have the skills to obtain or create work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % youth who say they know more about their employment/career options compared to when they first started the program • % of youth who say that the program increased their awareness of workplace health and safety and their labour rights • % of youth who say the program helped them set or strengthen their employment/career goals • % of youth who say they are aware of which skills, sectors, and careers are projected to be in demand in the future • % of youth who say they know more about what steps they can take to achieve their employment/career goals (i.e., apprenticeship, education, employability skill development, training, networking, job search, entrepreneurship etc.) compared to when they first started the program • % of youth who say the program helped them make progress towards their employment/career goals • % of youth who say they are more confident in their ability to find, apply, and interview for jobs (e.g., write a resume and cover letter, search for job opportunities, prepare for an interview), or develop their own business compared to when they first started the program

Outcome Area	Outcomes	Performance Measures
Employment and entrepreneurship Toronto youth have transferable and technical skills to create or obtain employment and advance their chosen employment path.	Toronto youth have transferrable and technical skills to succeed in employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of youth who say they are more confident in their technical skills (i.e., the skills they need to be able to work in the sector they are interested in or the sector that was the focus of the program) compared to when they first started the program • % of youth who say they are more confident in their transferrable/employability skills (e.g., ability to use technology on the job, time management skills, ability to communicate professionally) compared to when they first started the program
	Toronto youth pursue and successfully complete education and training related to their interests and chosen path	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # and % of youth who are enrolled in education or training, by type (e.g., skills training, secondary, post-secondary, apprenticeship, other City of Toronto programming) • # and % of youth who complete education or training, by type (e.g., skills training, secondary, post-secondary, apprenticeship, other City of Toronto programming) • Among youth who are enrolled in and/or who complete education or training: % of youth who say the education or training is aligned with their learning/employment/career goals • # and % of youth who obtained an education or training credential or certification, by type (if possible)
	Toronto youth obtain, create, retain, and advance in meaningful, sustainable work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # and % of youth who are employed in paid work (measured at the time that they leave the program as well as a follow-up point or points after the program) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Among those who were unemployed or underemployed at the beginning of the program, # and % of youth who are employed in paid work (measured at the time that they leave the program as well as a follow-up point or points after the program) • % of youth who are self-employed • Among all youth who are employed in paid work: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Average number of hours worked per week • % of youth who say they are working their preferred number of hours per week • Median hourly wage before taxes and deductions • Median annual earnings • % of youth who say their work is safe • % of youth who say their work is meaningful to them • % of youth who say they feel they are advancing in their work • % of youth who said that the program helped them find, obtain, and/or keep their job

Outcome Area	Outcomes	Performance Measures
<p>Civic and community engagement</p> <p>Toronto youth participate in community initiatives, take on leadership roles, contribute to decision-making processes, and feel included in their communities.</p>	<p>Toronto youth are involved in their communities and take part in programming, community events, and volunteering opportunities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of youth who say they are aware of opportunities to get involved in their communities (e.g., by taking part in programs or recreation, going to community events, or volunteering) as a result of participating in the program • % of youth who say that they are interested in getting involved in their communities (e.g., by taking part in other programs or recreation, going to community events, or volunteering) compared to when they first started the program • % of youth who say they have gotten involved in their communities (e.g., by taking part in other programs and recreation, going to community events, or volunteering) since they started the program
	<p>Toronto youth take on leadership roles in their communities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of youth who say they are interested in taking on a leadership or advocacy role in their communities (e.g., organizing or leading a program or event for others in their communities, supporting their peers, or joining a committee, working group, or community organization) compared to when they first started the program • % of youth who say they have taken on a leadership or advocacy role in their communities (e.g., organizing or leading a program or event for others in their communities, supporting their peers, or joining a committee, working group, or community organization) since they started the program • % of youth who say they have been able to take on a leadership or advocacy role in City of Toronto programming (e.g. taking on a leadership role in a youth advisory group)
	<p>Toronto youth feel included in their communities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of youth who say they feel a greater sense of belonging to their community/ies (e.g., school, faith group, neighbourhood, youth group, community arts group, interest group, sports group) compared to when they first started the program
	<p>Toronto youth have the opportunity to contribute to the decisions that affect them</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of youth who say that they more are aware of opportunities for them to share their opinions and perspectives on decisions that affect them in their communities compared to when they first started the program • % of youth who say their understanding of local governance has improved compared to when they first started the program • Among those who are old enough to vote, % of youth who say they are more likely to vote in the next municipal (City of Toronto), provincial, or federal election compared to when they first started the program

Outcome Area	Outcomes	Performance Measures
Participant reach and satisfaction	Toronto youth have equitable access to City of Toronto programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # and % of youth served by socio-demographic characteristic (age, gender, neighborhood of residence/postal code, language preference, Canadian-born or immigrant and time of immigration, Indigenous identity, race, disability, sexual orientation, education level (before starting the program), employment status (before starting the program)) • % of youth who say they could easily get to the space in which the program took place • % of youth who say they were not placed on a waitlist before accessing the program or service • % of youth who say it is easy to find information about available programs
	Toronto youth feel safe and welcome in City of Toronto programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of youth who say they feel safe and welcome in the space in which the program was delivered • % of youth who say that they were treated with respect by program staff • % of youth who say that they were treated with respect by other program participants • % of youth who say that they could trust the program staff • % of youth who say they felt understood by program staff • % of youth who say that their identity was reflected in the program staff • % of youth who say the program was/program staff were sensitive to their cultural needs • % of youth who say they felt included and that their voice was heard throughout the program • % of youth who say their opinions and perspectives were taken into account regarding decisions that affect them in the program
	Toronto youth are satisfied with their experience in City of Toronto programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of youth who say they are satisfied with their overall experience in the program • % of youth who say they would recommend the program to a peer • % of youth who say that the program helped them move forward with the goals that they had when they first started the program

2.

Youth Violence Prevention Spectrum & Menu of Risk Factors

The **Youth Violence Prevention Spectrum** explains the different approaches to youth violence prevention based on who is being served:

- General youth population (12-29),
- Youth that experience more than one risk factor for serious crime and violence,
- Youth involved in violent behaviour and/or high risk activities (e.g. non-violent crimes), and
- Perpetrators of violence and crime as well as victims of violence, including affected communities.

Youth Violence Prevention Spectrum

	Social Development (Upstream)	Targeted Prevention (Midstream)	Intervention (Downstream)	Incident Response
Definition	Programs for the general youth population that aim to prevent the development of risk factors for serious violence and crime through the promotion of positive youth development.	Programs for youth that experience more than one risk factor for serious violence and crime that aim to reduce these risk factors.	Programs for youth involved in violent behaviour or high risk activities that aims to interrupt the reoccurrence or escalation of violence.	Immediate and reactive responses to crime or safety that involve victims, perpetrators of crime and violence as well as affected communities.
The intensity (i.e. program dosage) and cost of programs per capita increases as you move from social development to intervention.				

City of Toronto youth programs*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhanced Youth Spaces (PFR) + Youth Hubs (TPL) xoTO Schools Co-op (EDC) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Healing (SDFA) Restorative Justice (SDFA) More Life Skills (SDFA) TCHC Youth Violence Reduction Program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project Prosper (SDFA) TYES Support Services (SDFA) 	These responses are led by the Toronto Police Service, Paramedic Services and Community Crisis Response Program.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Type (SDFA) Innovative Case Management (TESS) Youth Worx (TCH) Employment and Wellness Program (TCH) 			

* The chart includes select number of youth programs from the Youth Service Inventory. All programs not shown on this slide fall under “social development.”

Upstream and downstream programs are equally important and work together to support a culture of youth violence prevention. What is more, the majority of investments need to be focused on developing and/or enhancing youth programs that fall under social development, prevention and intervention to reduce the number of youth that reach the point of incident response.

The majority of the City of Toronto youth programs fall under social development. In other words, most City youth programs are geared at the general youth population and contribute to preventing the development of risk factors to crime and violence through the promotion of positive youth development. This includes well established and popular programs such as the City of Toronto's youth hubs and youth spaces.

The mapping also reveals a lack of “targeted prevention” and “intervention” programs in the City of Toronto's youth service portfolio. These type of programs are high dosage (i.e. frequency, intensity, and duration) and target youth that are either experiencing risk factors for violence or are already involved in violence, crime and/or high risk activities.

Menu of Risk Factors for Youth Violence and Crime

Risk factors for youth violence and crime are circumstances or conditions that increase the probability that a young person will become involved in violence and/or criminal activity. Various promising violence prevention programs apply these risk factors to identify youth most vulnerable to serious crime and violence and design programs to either reduce these risk factors or increase protective factors (i.e. supportive adults) to buffer their harmful effect.

The following sections presents:

- Risk factors for targeted prevention programs, and
- Risk factors for intervention programs.

It is important to highlight that although exposure to risk factors can increase the likelihood of involvement in crime and violence, it does not make it a certainty. What is more, the predictive value of risk factors is contingent on when they occur in a young person's development. Some risk factors like substance abuse are more impactful during earlier years (before the age of 12), while others persist through a person's life span.

The risk factors are organized based on the stages of youth development that enhance the predictive power of the risk.

Menu of Risk Factors for Targeted Prevention Programs

The risk factors are organized based on the stages of youth development that enhance the predictive value of the risk.

Childhood (0-12)	Adolescence (13-19)	Young Adult/Older Youth (17-29)
Victimization		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth has been the victim of a crime (assault, robbery, threat, sexual assault etc.) 		
Mental Health & Cognitive Functioning		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-reported and/or diagnosed cognitive impairment Diagnosed and/or self-reported mental health problem Person experiencing grief Person lived through and/or witnessed traumatic event Person has engaged in and/or threatened self-harm 		
Family Circumstances	Peers	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing parent-child conflict Child/youth not receiving proper parenting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Person associating with negative peers Person serving as a negative peer to others 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical violence in the home Sexual violence in the home Caregivers chronically unemployed 	Neighborhood & Housing	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social environment - neighborhood Person doesn't have access to appropriate housing 	
Substance Abuse	Antisocial Non-Criminal Behaviour	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alcohol and drug abuse by person Alcohol and drug abuse in home 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Person exhibiting antisocial/negative behaviour Perpetrator of physical violence Perpetrator of sexual violence Perpetrator of emotional violence 	
	Education and Employment	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disengagement from school Chronic absenteeism Person chronically unemployed 	

Definition of Risk Factors for Targeted Prevention Programs

The definition of risk factors is based on the following literature: **Toronto Public Health's Community Violence Report, Public Safety Canada National Crime Prevention Strategy** as well the **Provincial Community Safety and Wellbeing Planning Framework**.

Risk Factor	Definition
Victimization	
Victimization	Youth has been the victim of a crime (assault, robbery, threat, sexual assault etc.)
Mental Health and Cognitive Functioning	
Self-reported and/ or diagnosed cognitive impairment	Youth has a professionally diagnosed and or reported to others that they have a cognitive impairment/limitation.
Diagnosed and/or self-reported mental health challenge	Youth has a professionally diagnosed and or reported to others that they have mental health challenge. A mental health challenge occurs when an individual does not receive the support they need to cope with the challenges they are experiencing. Mental health challenges may be experienced as anxiety, depression or other symptoms of untreated mental illness.
Experiencing grief	Youth is experiencing deep sorrow, sadness or distress caused by loss.
Lived through or witnessed traumatic event	Youth has lived through or witnessed a distressing event that has caused them emotional or physical trauma. Examples of distressing events include: physical or verbal assault; sexual assault; witnessing violence against others; and long-term neglect.
Engaged in and/or threatened self-harm	Youth has engaged in/stated that they intend to engage in the deliberate non-suicidal injuring of their own body.
Family Circumstances (Early Risk Factor - Childhood)	
Ongoing parent-child conflict	There is ongoing disagreement and argument between guardian and youth that affects the functionality of their relationship and communication between the two parties
Lack of supportive parenting	Youth is not receiving a stable, nurturing home environment that includes positive role models and concern for the total development of the child
Physical violence in the home	Youth lives with threatened or real physical violence in the home
Sexual violence in the home	Youth resides in a home where sexual harassment, humiliation, exploitation, touching, or forced sexual acts occur
Caregivers chronically unemployed	The caregivers are persistently without paid work

Risk Factor	Definition
Substance Abuse Issues (Early Risk Factor – Age 12 and earlier)	
Alcohol and drug abuse by person	Youth is known to excessively consume alcohol and or drugs; causing self-harm
Alcohol and drug abuse in home	Youth is living at a residence where drugs and or alcohol have been consumed excessively and often
Peers (Late Risk Factor – Adolescence and Young Adulthood)	
Social environment - neighbourhood	Youth lives in a neighbourhood known to potentially entice negative behaviour or increase the risks of an individual to be exposed to or directly involved in other social harms (e.g. individual acts of harm, inter-personal violence, theft, etc).
Person doesn't have access to appropriate housing	Youth is having a negative impact on the thoughts, actions or decision of others. This can include being bullied, rejecting peers or engaging in aggressive or risk-taking behaviour.
Neighbourhood and Housing (Late Risk Factor – Adolescence and Young Adulthood)	
Lived through or witnessed traumatic event	Youth lives in a neighbourhood known to potentially entice negative behaviour or increase the risks of an individual to be exposed to or directly involved in other social harms (e.g. individual acts of harm, inter-personal violence, theft, etc).
Engaged in and/or threatened self-harm	Youth has engaged in/stated that they intend to engage in the deliberate non-suicidal injuring of their own body.
Antisocial Non-Criminal Behaviour (Late Risk Factor – Adolescence)	
Exhibiting antisocial/negative behaviour	Youth is engaged in behaviour that lacks consideration of others, which leads to damages to other individuals or the community. This behaviour can include bullying, aggression, abuse, violence, and risk-taking through substance use, self-harm, or activities that threaten the safety and/or wellbeing of self or others. Anti-social, aggressive, and risk-taking behaviour may manifest differently among different individual youth. For example, male youth may exhibit aggressive behaviour more commonly than female youth, who may more commonly engage in psychological bullying.
Perpetrator of physical violence	Youth has instigated or caused physical violence to another person
Perpetrator of sexual violence	Youth has been the perpetrator of sexual harassment, humiliation, exploitation, touching or forced sexual acts
Perpetrator of emotional violence	Youth has emotionally harmed others by controlling their behaviour, name-calling, yelling, belittling, bullying, intentionally ignoring them, etc.

Risk Factor	Definition
Education/Employment (Late Risk Factor – Adolescence)	
Disengagement from school	Youth has a lack of interest or participation in academic work and/or school-related social activities.
Chronic absenteeism	Youth has an unexcused absences from school without parental knowledge, that exceed the commonly acceptable norm for school absenteeism
Chronically unemployed	Youth is and has been persistently without paid work

Menu of Risk Factors for Intervention Programs

The risk factors are organized based on the stages of youth development that enhance the predictive value of the risk.

Adolescence (13-19)	Young Adults/Older Youth (17-29)
Criminal Involvement – Violent	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assault • Robbery • Homicide 	
Experience in a Correctional Facility	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Person has been released from a correctional facility 	
Criminal Involvement – Non-violent (15-18)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drug trafficking • Possession of weapons • Threats • Damage to property • Break and enter 	
Gang Issues	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gang involvement • Gang affiliated • Threatened by gang 	

Definition of Risk Factors for Intervention Programs

The definition of risk factors is based on the following literature: **Toronto Public Health's Community Violence Report, Public Safety Canada National Crime Prevention Strategy** as well the **Provincial Community Safety and Wellbeing Planning Framework**.

Risk Factor	Definition
Criminal Involvement - Violent	
Assault	Youth has been suspected, charged, arrested or convicted of physical and or sexual assault.
Robbery	Youth has been suspected, charged, arrested or convicted of theft and or robbery.
Homicide	Youth has been suspected, charged, arrested or convicted of the unlawful death of a person.
Experience in a Correctional Facility	
Correctional Facility	Youth has been released from a correctional facility.
Criminal Involvement – Non-violent (15-18)	
Drug trafficking	Youth has been suspected, charged, arrested or convicted of drug trafficking.
Possession of weapons	Youth has been suspected, charged, arrested or convicted of possession of weapons.
Threats	Youth has been suspected, charged, arrested or convicted of uttering threats.
Damage to property	Youth has been suspected, charged, arrested or convicted of damage to property.
Break and enter	Youth has been suspected, charged, arrested or convicted of break and enter.
Gang Issues	
Gang involvement	Youth is suspected to be a member of a gang and involved in criminal activity.
Gang affiliated	Youth is not a gang member but social circle involves known gang members and youth may be subject to penalties due to association with gang activity.
Threatened by gang	Youth has received a statement of intention to be injured or harmed by gang members.

3.

Promising Practices to Improve Program Access

This section provides a brief description of promising practices that the City of Toronto may consider to improve accessibility of programs and services for youth who face structural inequities and/or youth experiencing risk factors for serious violence and crime. The practices are drawn from an extensive literature review and jurisdictional scan.

It is important to note that the City of Toronto programs and services included in the Youth Program Inventory (Attachment 1) already apply some of the identified promising practices. However, there are always opportunities for improvement and exploring new program enhancements to optimize services for Toronto youth, particularly youth facing structural inequities.

The recommended promising practices to improve program accessibility include:

1. Targeted outreach through multiple channels and Intensive Case Management (ICM) approaches to reach the most underserved youth.

Research finds that for youth who face significant structural inequities and risk factors, it is particularly important to undertake outreach through relatable individuals (or “credible messengers”) who understand the particular youth, and have shared lived experience or direct ties to the community. For the City, this suggests an opportunity to:

- Undertake promotions through multiple channels, particularly through actors that youth who face structural inequities know and trust (e.g., peers and adults with shared lived experience, parents). This may include engaging “credible messengers” as outreach workers, by hiring individuals with similar lived experience and strong ties to the communities from which youth who face structural inequities tend to be.
- Involve youth in outreach and program promotion to develop promotional materials such as posters, flyers, and social media graphics, and gathering feedback from youth programs participants about the best way to engage others to participate in the program.
- Draw on ICM approaches designed to reach and support individuals with complex needs by developing a client-centred, recovery-focused, trusting, and long-term

relationship with an individual through deep and continuous engagement, and coordinating a range of services for the individual (e.g., mental health, housing, daily living, employment). In order to reach youth who are not connected to services or programming, the City could train its outreach staff in ICM approaches and when new outreach staff are hired, prioritize hiring individuals with ICM expertise.

2. Collect information about youth participating in City programs to assess effectiveness of outreach, engagement, and reach.

This means that City Divisions delivering youth focused programming should systematically and regularly collect and review socio-demographic information about the youth who participate in their programming, drawing on the City's Data for Equity Strategy. This practice will enable City Divisions to properly assess the extent to which their programs are reaching youth who face structural inequities and use that information to inform their decision-making, program design and development.

3. Consider program design to remove access barriers, including program location, cost, and registration process, and add program content that speaks to the interests and experiences of youth who face structural inequities and barriers.

There is ample evidence on commonly experienced barriers in program design by various subgroups of youth such as financial barriers (e.g., registration cost, limited available low-cost and free programs), transportation barriers (e.g., unreliable bus schedules, multiple transfers, the expense of TTC fare), youth perception of not belonging or relating to the program group, lack of awareness of programs, barriers with navigating the registration process or lacking internet access. While the barriers faced by the population groups outlined here do not cover the experiences of all groups included in the category of youth who face structural inequities, they do highlight an opportunity for the City of Toronto to ensure all its youth programs are designed to avoid these barriers. This could include:

- Hold more programs in neighbourhoods where a greater number of youth who face structural inequities reside, and ensure there are sufficient spots available so that individuals are not competing for spots.
- Ensure that programs in low-income neighbourhoods are free or low-cost.
- Provide TTC fare, food, and bursaries/honoraria.
- Identify program delivery locations that are known to youth, easy to get to and avoid locations that are considered unsafe by residents.
- Enhance the number of programs that include components for skills building, work preparation, work experience, volunteering.
- Ensure program content recognizes the diversity of experiences and identities youth participants may have, including culture, world view, gender, sexuality, socioeconomic status, etc.

- Ensure registration processes are as easy as possible, including online, phone, and in-person registration options, and alternative payment options for those who may not have credit cards, and provide support for registration by making staff, including multilingual staff, available.

4. Employ staff and peer support workers with shared lived experience with youth who face structural inequities.

Research shows that a strong relationship of trust with program staff facilitated by shared lived experience or identity between staff and program participants is important for program success. It helps develop a sense of belonging, engaging and retaining youth in programming. For the City, there is an opportunity to:

- Review its hiring practices for frontline staff and ensure individuals with lived experience that is similar to that of various subgroups of youth who face structural inequities are prioritized.
- Enhance the number of peer support workers or peer mentors who are hired as part of programs staff teams.
- Support staff and peers with training in building trusting relationships with youth, as well as is building cultural competency and ability to bring confronting anti-Black and anti-Indigenous racism approaches and awareness and skills in working with strengths-based, trauma-informed, and healing-focused lenses. The City may consider making this training more broadly available to frontline staff by expanding its Frontline Worker Training Series.

5. Provide opportunities for youth to access additional supports if needed.

The existing literature suggests that youth who face complex, multiple significant risk factors may need additional support to assist their life stabilization and healing processes so they are able to participate in programming and benefit from it. For the City, there is an opportunity to:

- Design youth programs to include a counsellor and/or case manager (an intensive case manager) who is available for youth to access for help with short term counselling and accessing other resources or services, if they choose to.
- Support program staff with training and tools to destigmatize asking for help and encourage youth to reach out to the counsellor/case manager if they would like to.

6. Establish meaningful youth engagement opportunities for youth to co-design and provide feedback on program design and content.

A common finding from the literature is that in order to ensure that programming reflects the interests, experiences, and needs of youth who face structural inequities, it is important to meaningfully engage them and seek their input, which also provides youth with leadership opportunities. For the City, there is an opportunity to:

- Provide multiple youth-friendly options for youth to be engaged in decision-making and co-designing processes for programs with program staff.
- Collect youth feedback on their experience with programming and make adjustments based on that feedback.

7. Expand frontline staff training and establish tools and processes for effective early identification of risk factors and referrals to support.

Research undertaken as part of preparing the Toronto Youth Equity Strategy (2017) identified the fact that youth services and programs delivered by the City of Toronto are fragmented, and providing support to staff to act as part of an interconnected system could help ensure that youth receive the support they need. Another research on effective referral practices indicated that a warm handoff, through which a trusted staff introduces an individual to a staff at a new program or service and later follows up with the referred individual, is critical for ensuring an individual's referral compliance.

For the City, this suggests an opportunity to expand SDA's Frontline Worker Training Series to support staff to:

- Build their knowledge of the full suite of City of Toronto programs and the youth who would be a good fit for each of these programs.
- Identify youth who may be facing various risk factors, and work with them to suggest additional programs and services or make an external referral (e.g., to mental health treatment and support, addictions support, housing support, financial assistance, etc.) in a trauma-informed, healing-centred, strengths-based, youth-friendly, and anti-racist manner.

In addition, the City could develop tools or protocols (e.g., a referral protocol) to establish consistency and support frontline staff in making referrals, to help ensure youth effectively connect to the supports and programming that is a good fit for them.

8. Define a target population for targeted prevention and intervention programs based on the risk factors for youth violence and crime. Ensure the target population is being reached through more advanced methods such as focused referrals, targeted outreach and/or assessment tools.

Identifying a target population provides clarity and helps develop an effective program model for violence prevention. The menu of risk factors for youth violence and crime provides existing and future programs with options to refine their program reach. The identification of program-specific risk factors should rely on various sources of data particularly if the focus is a particular demographic youth group (i.e. girls, racialized males) or a specific neighborhood, including feedback from subject matter experts, youth with lived experience and community members that understand the local context. Feedback can be collected through interviews, focus groups and/or population-specific surveys.

In order to identify youth that experience these risk factors, many promising practices from other jurisdictions utilize targeted outreach methods and focused referrals from schools, community agencies, local youth organizations and probation services.